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HEROES

of Might and Magic®

The Official Strategy Guide



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Jeff Hoff

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Heroes of Might and Magic®: The Official Strategy Guide



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Heroes of Might and Magic®: The Official Strategy Guide

Jeff Hoff

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Introduction

How to Use This Book

Deceptively difficult is perhaps the best way to describe *Heroes of Might and Magic*. Don't let the cartoon-like graphics fool you—*Heroes* can be a tough game to win. This guide offers insight into the workings of *Heroes of Might and Magic*, shares information on how the computer Artificial Intelligence thinks, gives a detailed analysis of the different units and spells, and provides strategies you can use in standard, campaign, and multiplayer games. This guide also contains descriptions and strategies for all the maps of *Heroes and Might and Magic*, including the latest maps offered in the Windows®95 version of *Heroes*.

Part I (the first seven chapters) guides you through the basic elements of the game. The heroes are introduced, along with their respective castles and dwellings. The treasures you can find, and the artifacts and locations you can visit, are described in detail.

Part II (chapters 8-12) are strategies you can use in combat and while adventuring. This section covers the units, their advantages and disadvantages, the different spells your heroes can learn and when and how to use them, and also things to consider while exploring the map. These strategies are invaluable in the normal scenarios, and can be even more useful in multiplayer and campaign games.

Chapters 12 and 13 are lists of the standard and multiplayer maps for *Heroes*. Descriptions and strategies are also included for each map. General strategies are also included for multiplayer play. If you are having problems beating any of the maps, or if you cannot figure out how your friend always seems to get the jump on you in multiplayer play, this section will provide answers for you.

Chapter 14 gives the methods to beat each of the campaign scenarios. Of all the *Heroes* scenarios, the campaigns (especially the later campaign maps) could be considered the most difficult. This chapter gives methods you can use to defeat even the hardest campaign scenarios. Moving from scenario to scenario, this chapter covers every step of the campaign, how to begin each scenario, and how to win the tough fights at the end of each scenario.

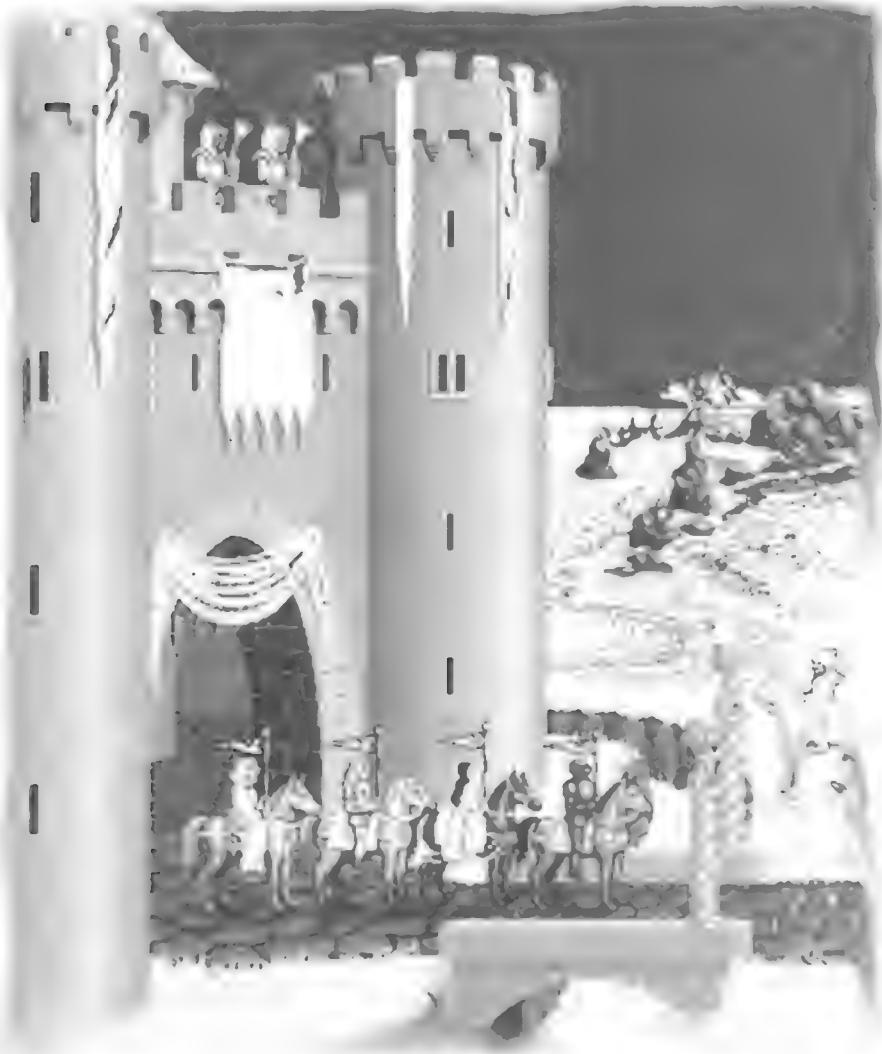
Chapter 15 is the summary of all the new maps included in the Windows 95 version of *Heroes*. These are the newest maps made by the designers of *Heroes of Might and Magic*, and all were created on the Map Editor included with the Windows 95 release. Descriptions for these new maps, and the strategies you can use to defeat them, are also contained in this section.



The information in this guide spans from the obvious to the obscure, assisting any player from the beginner to the expert. Much of this knowledge was gained through conversations and notes from the designers and playtesters of *Heroes*, providing a more insightful look into the workings of the game. Factor in the information on the Windows 95 version maps and the numerous helpful tips, and this guide is all you need to be the greatest Hero of Might and Magic.

Part I

The Realms of Might and Magic



Chapter One



The Objectives of Heroes of Might and Magic

The objective of each standard scenario in *Heroes of Might and Magic* is simple: Conquer all other warlords on the map before they can conquer you. To do this, you must overthrow every castle and vanquish every hero. Until you have conquered all your opposing heroes, the possibility exists that he or she might make a comeback. So, the game is not over until you're the only one left standing.

Beyond total domination, you face a secondary objective: getting your name on the high score list—an accomplishment based upon the difficulty rating of each scenario.

How Your Final Score Is Calculated

If you are the conquering warlord in a standard game, the computer automatically calculates your final score by multiplying how many days it takes you to conquer the scenario by the difficulty rating at which you played the scenario. If your score is one of the ten highest scores of all time, you earn the right to place your name among the Legendary Heroes of Might and Magic. The Top Ten list is the same for the standard and multiplayer games, but a separate honor roll exists for the campaign game. The final score for campaigns is based not on map difficulty, but strictly on the number of days it takes you to complete the goals of all eight maps in the campaign.



The image contains two screenshots of the game's interface. The top screenshot shows a 'Standard score' list titled 'LEGENDARY HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC'. It lists ten entries with columns for Player, Land, Score, and Title. The bottom screenshot shows a 'Campaign score' list with similar columns. Both lists include decorative scrollwork borders.

| PLAYER | LAND | SCORE | TITLE |
|-----------------|----------------|-------|----------|
| 1. Lord Kilburn | The Castle | 100 | Claw |
| 2. Sean | Two in by Sea | 100 | Cave |
| 3. Sir Galant | Knight's Quest | 90 | EU |
| 4. Thunders | Crossroads | 20 | Wolf |
| 5. Lord Heart | Shangri-La | 60 | Ewart |
| 6. Ariel | River's End | 50 | Gargoyle |
| 7. Rebecca | Pathways | 20 | Dragon |
| 8. Sandro | Sunset Lake | 10 | Rogue |
| 9. Gorgon | Continents | 20 | Sprite |
| 10. Sarah | One Tree | 10 | Golem |

| PLAYER | LAND | SCORE | TITLE |
|----------------|---------------|-------|----------|
| 1. Maximus | Lord Ironfist | 900 | Galath |
| 2. Antoine | Lord Slaver | 100 | Ghost |
| 3. Gorgon | Lord Drak | 300 | Drak |
| 4. Gorgon | Lord Almanz | 120 | Griffin |
| 5. Gorgon | Queen Lamanda | 1000 | Wolf |
| 6. Gorgon | Lord Almanz | 1700 | Sward |
| 7. Gorgon | Lord Ironfist | 2000 | Gargoyle |
| 8. Gorgon | Lord Ironfist | 2100 | Orc |
| 9. Gorgon | Lord Slaver | 8200 | Sprite |
| 10. Whiskerman | Lord Almanz | 9400 | Peasant |

Figure 1-1

Standard score and campaign score lists.

Number of Maps and Base Points

All maps are automatically described in two ways: by size—Small, Medium, or Large; and by difficulty level—Easy, Normal, Tough, or Impossible.

The first half of the final score equation equals the number of days you take to conquer a scenario, which is entirely under your control. The other half of the final score equation comprises the scenario's difficulty rating, found at the bottom of the main menu screen beneath the map name. This difficulty level is preset for the map and the game choices you make at the start of the scenario. The following table shows the variables the computer uses to calculate the difficulty rating for each of the maps in *Heroes of Might and Magic*.

Taking a sample map, such as Claw, through each of the different variables is the easiest way to explain this difficulty rating table.

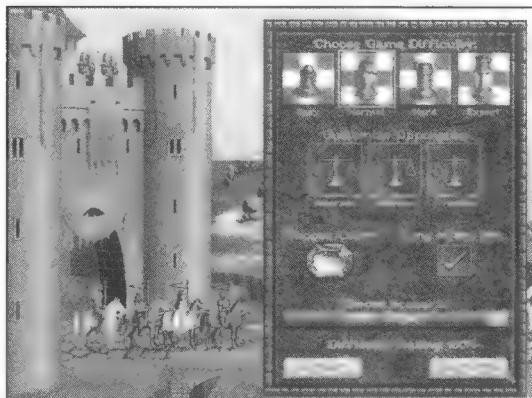


Figure 1-2

Main menu with difficulty rating.

Table 1-1 Difficulty Rating Variables for Scenario Maps

| <u>Map Difficulty</u> | <u>Base Points</u> | <u>Opponent</u> | <u>King of the Hill</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | None/Dumb/Average/Smart/Ingenious | 1 opp. /2 opp. /3 opp. |
| Easy | +20% | -10%/+5%/+10%/+15%/+20% | 0/+5%/+10% |
| Normal | +30% | -10%/+5%/+10%/+15%/+20% | 0/+5%/+10% |
| Tough | +40% | -10%/+5%/+10%/+15%/+20% | 0/+5%/+10% |
| Impossible | +50% | -10%/+5%/+10%/+15%/+20% | 0/+5%/+10% |
| <u>Map Difficulty</u> | <u>Player Difficulty</u> | | |
| | Easy/Normal/Hard/Expert | | |
| Easy | 0/+10%/+20%/+30% | | |
| Normal | 0/+10%/+20%/+30% | | |
| Tough | 0/+10%/+20%/+30% | | |
| Impossible | 0/+10%/+20%/+30% | | |

The game's designers set the size and difficulty levels after months of gameplay. These levels are somewhat arbitrary, based more on feel than mathematics. Some of the factors they considered in arriving at these descriptions include:

- U Where you start on a map.
- U How far away you are from your computer opponents when you start.
- U The types of resources and hazards that surround you at the start.
- U How easy it is for both you and the computer to expand.
- U What artifacts are available to you and the computer.
- U How difficult it is to capture mines you need to expand.



If you play around with the maps and starting variables on the main menu, you'll see that the difficulty ratings vary greatly. They can range from the technically impossible—minus 10 on Claw with no opponents (which can't happen because you have to play against at least one foe)—to the truly impossible, 150 percent at the expert level on Jolly Roger with three geniuses ganging up on you. When you factor in the number of days it takes to win a scenario, you can see how important the difficulty rating is in tabulating the final score.

The score for days-to-win starts at 200, drops by 1 point for the first 60 days taken, by .5 for days 61-120, .25 for days 121-360, and .125 thereafter, to a minimum of 0. Thus, if it takes you 80 days, and your difficulty rating was 80 percent, the days-to-win part of your base score is $(200 - (60 \times 1) - (20 \times .5)) = 130$ times 80%, which equals 104.

After several months of playing all the levels, the testers at New World arrived at a rule-of-thumb that puts any score into perspective, regardless of the map you're playing. If your final score is over 100, you're doing well, much better than most. But if it's over 130, you definitely belong in the warlord hall of fame.

Chapter Two



Looking for a Few Good Heroes

You (and your opponents) start each game with a single designated hero, but you can purchase additional heroes for 2,500 gold during each turn. *Heroes of Might and Magic* gives you 36 heroes in all, nine each of four different types: Knight, Barbarian, Warlock, and Sorceress. This chapter describes each type of hero, and the pros and cons of each. Although each type is different, none of them demonstrates clearly superior hero abilities in all situations. Depending upon the type of scenario—its size and difficulty level, predominant terrain, proximity of resources and opponents—each hero type provides distinct advantages. To help you maximize the effectiveness of your heroes, this chapter discusses when and why you should select one hero type over another as your “right arm” in the field.

If you begin a scenario with a hero you don't love, you obviously can purchase a new one. But what if neither of the two new heroes available for purchase at any given time is what you want or need? It can become expensive—especially at higher difficulty levels in which money is scarce—to keep buying heroes until your champion emerges. One solution is to exercise patience. The two faces in the hero “store” change every week. Wait until the new week starts before you buy. Chances are, your type of hero will appear there shortly.





General Hero Strategy

According to the New World testers, your most consistent chance of success in the game stems from finding one hero you like, then building him or her into “a really nasty hero.” This means you concentrate your best troops and all artifacts with that hero. It also means that, when you wage battle, you should do so most of the time with this hero. As you fight any opponent and win, you gain experience points. When your experience points climb above a certain total, you jump up a level in experience and receive additional skills. Your goal should be to gain as much experience for one or two heroes as you can, as quickly as you can. That way, you grow strong enough to attack or defend yourself against powerful computer opponents. Remember, while you’re building, so are they—and often they are much better at it than you are.



When you're building up a super hero, it's particularly good to attack wandering armies. First, they're safer than hero armies, because you always know their approximate strength relative to yours, so there can't be any major surprises. When you attack a computer hero, you always run the risk that it has powerful spells or has found a stupendous artifact and will blow you away. Second, wandering armies can never retreat as heroes can and frequently do. Once you have these armies beat, they stay beat—and you collect all of your experience points.

Though it's not a hard-and-fast rule (and rather, more a rule-of-thumb), it's usually best to start your conquest with a hero that is stronger in Attack and Defense than in Spell Power and Knowledge. In most scenarios you must very quickly defeat an army of creatures in order to break out of your immediate castle surroundings. This invariably takes more might than magic. This concept holds even more true on smaller maps where opponents come up on you much faster and you must more quickly break through to mine your resources, as well as when you're playing higher difficulty levels. The higher the level, the less resources you start with and the more likely you will have to fight for everything you get.

Playing at the Expert Level

At the expert difficulty level in which you start with no resources or gold, it is usually better to start as either a barbarian or a knight. With these characters,



you only need wood and ore to gain access to all of your units except the most powerful. Therefore, you can grow to power much more quickly and inexpensively. As a warlock or sorceress, you need additional resources beyond wood and ore to purchase comparatively weaker troops.

Barbarians and knights don't require a mage guild in order to reach their maximum power, while warlocks and sorceresses are virtually powerless without it. They must spend precious resources on both the guild and troops, whereas knights and barbarians can concentrate their supplies on troops alone. Later on, when knights and barbarians have accumulated wealth by virtue of conquest, they can spend money and resources on a mage guild.



Many of the testers at New World favor the knight heroes because of their comparatively higher defense skill at the start of play. When you pair them with a knight hero, these ratings increase, and it's difficult for opponents to defeat them.

Playing at the Easy Level

The advantages knights and barbarians enjoy on the expert level, however, turn into disadvantages at the easy difficulty level. On the easy level, the spellcasters hold the advantage. With plenty of money and resources at your disposal, it's easy to buy a mage guild, and the spellcasters' superior spell power and knowledge start to pay off quickly. A warlock or sorceress with Lightning Bolt and Blind spells forms a formidable opponent. Also, it becomes easier for them to purchase their highest level creatures, a dragon and phoenix, which are the best in the game.

Hero Statistics

Battle means everything in *Heroes of Might and Magic* because victory in battle gives you experience points. In the hero chart on page 11, you can see the number of experience points you need to qualify for each level, as well as the possible skills—Defense, Attack, Spell Power, and Knowledge—you can receive upon reaching that level. The number of experience points required to climb to each level is the same for all four hero types. However, the odds of receiving a certain skill at a new level differs for each of the hero types.



Why are the odds different for each? Each hero type starts with strength in some skills and weakness in others. For example, a warlock has strong knowledge and spell power skills but no attack or defense skills, while a knight is strong defensively but relatively weak in the spellcasting department. These differences give each of the hero types a definite combat “personality” that colors virtually every strategic decision that a warlord/player makes. In order to preserve this personality throughout the game, yet also allow weaknesses to strengthen, each hero receives one skill point at each new experience level. But, as the chart shows, the odds of receiving a skill point in a hero’s natural strength are much higher than receiving a skill point in a natural weakness.

As a hero gains experience points in combat, his experience level increases. At each new level, the hero gains one of four possible skill bonuses: Attack, Defense, Spell Power, or Knowledge. This chart shows the chances (in percentage) of each hero type and each experience level receiving a particular skill bonus. For example, the knight has a 20 percent chance of receiving one (+1) attack bonus point when his experience level reaches the second level.

Natural Strengths

Let’s use the knight as an example. The chart shows that at level one, a knight hero always starts with +1 attack skill, +1 spell power, +1 spell knowledge, and a +2 defense skill. His natural strength, therefore, is defense. This is reflected in subsequent levels by the fact that, when the knight reaches a new level, the odds of receiving another skill point in defense is usually greater than the odds of receiving a point in the other three skills. In level two, for example, the knight has a 60 percent chance of receiving a skill point in defense, a 20 percent chance of gaining an attack skill, and only a 10 percent chance each of receiving an increase in spell power or knowledge.

The numbers in this chart reveal that each hero type favors one of each of the four attributes over all others, and that’s important to know when you start the game. As just shown, the knight favors defense, which will likely increase his defensive strength rapidly as he gains experience. It will also grow fairly quickly in attack skill, but the odds of building strong spellcasting ability are quite low—unless he finds the appropriate ultimate artifact.

The barbarian possesses skills similar to the knight, but the emphasis is flip-flopped. Instead of favoring defense, he favors the attack. The odds of a barbarian receiving an attack skill (70 percent, typically) are even higher than the

Table 2-1 Hero Statistics

| Knight | | | | | Sorceress | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| <u>Level</u> | <u>Attack</u> | <u>Defense</u> | <u>Spells</u> | <u>Knowledge</u> | <u>Level</u> | <u>Attack</u> | <u>Defense</u> | <u>Spells</u> | <u>Knowledge</u> |
| Start | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | Start | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | 20 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 70 |
| 3 | 60 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 70 | 20 |
| 4 | 20 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 70 |
| 5 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 40 | 40 |
| 6 | 20 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 50 |
| 7 | 60 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 50 | 30 |
| 8 | 20 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 50 |
| 9 | 20 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 50 |
| 10 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 30 | 30 |
| 11+ Repeat Level 10 Numbers | | | | | 11+ Repeat Level 10 Numbers | | | | |
| 2-10 | 30 | 43.33 | 13.33 | 13.33 | 2-10 | 9.44 | 9.44 | 35.56 | 45.46 |
| Average | | | | | Average | | | | |

| Barbarian | | | | | Warlock | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| <u>Level</u> | <u>Attack</u> | <u>Defense</u> | <u>Spells</u> | <u>Knowledge</u> | <u>Level</u> | <u>Attack</u> | <u>Defense</u> | <u>Spells</u> | <u>Knowledge</u> |
| Start | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Start | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 70 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 70 | 20 |
| 3 | 20 | 70 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 70 |
| 4 | 70 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 70 | 20 |
| 5 | 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 40 | 40 |
| 6 | 70 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 50 | 30 |
| 7 | 20 | 70 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 50 |
| 8 | 70 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 50 | 30 |
| 9 | 70 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 50 | 30 |
| 10 | 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 30 | 30 |
| 11+ Repeat Level 10 Numbers | | | | | 11+ Repeat Level 10 Numbers | | | | |
| 2-10 | 52.22 | 35.56 | 6.22 | 6.22 | 2-10 | 9.44 | 9.44 | 45.56 | 35.56 |
| Average | | | | | Average | | | | |



odds of a knight receiving a defensive boost. The barbarian starts with little spellcasting power or knowledge and will probably stay that way. Therefore, as with the knight, it is usually not worth the time and effort to transform a barbarian into a merlin. They both should carry spells, particularly spells that remove opponents' spells, but focus on increasing attack and defense skills.

Both of the spellcaster types, the warlock and the sorceress, start with absolutely no attack or defense skills. As Table 2-1 shows, neither has a snowballs' chance in Hades of improving those attributes to any great degree as they grow in experience. While the knight and barbarian are battlers, these mages practice the black arts of warfare. The sorceress favors spell knowledge and the warlock favors spell power, but neither to a great degree over the other. Because it is so difficult to gain attack or defense skill through experience with these magicians, don't try. If an artifact boosts these numbers, so be it. However, concentrate on building the mage guild as fast as possible to acquire more varied and powerful spells. Mages are not as secure as the warriors at the start of a scenario because of their lack of defense and lack of spells until you've acquired a mage guild. Therefore, move cautiously with them. If you survive, you can later transform their early weakness into insurmountable strength.

The Hero Hall of Fame

Each of the hero types features special characteristics that make them a better selection as your main conqueror in different scenarios (and sometimes at different times within the same scenario). This section describes these attributes for each hero type, as well as when and why they are best brought into play. Note that heroes receive a +1 morale bonus for having all their troops from one of the four creature types.

Knight

The knight brings peasants and archers into his first armies. The number of starting troops is random and changes with each game. An advantage possessed by all knight heroes is a bonus of +1 morale just for being a knight. Furthermore, a +2 morale and extra battle attacks offer another good reason for starting the tougher maps with the knights.



Because of the knight's enhanced defense skill, it's good to leave a knight inside each of your castles. If you place the castle garrison troops into the knight's armies, their attack and defense skills are boosted by the knight's rating. It's an easy way to strengthen your castle defenses. Also, with the knight's morale bonus, you can strengthen his armies with three or four different kinds of troops (human, forest, plains, mountain). Normally, when you do that, the hero suffers a -1 morale penalty, but the knight's +1 bonus neutralizes its effect.



Ambrose the Knight



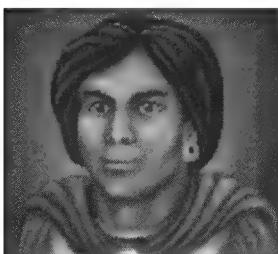
Lord Kilburn the Knight



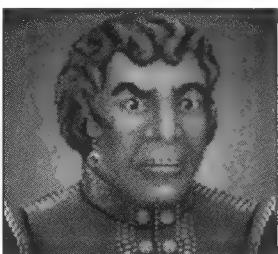
Maximus the Knight



Ector the Knight



Arturius the Knight



Dimitri the Knight



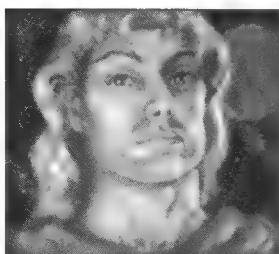
Tyro the Knight



Sir Gallant the Knight



The odds that your troops will receive extra attacks or extra movement in combat via high morale increases as your morale rating increases. Thus, with +1 morale, there's a one in 24 chance that any given unit on its turn will be blessed with the bonus. With +2, there's a one in 12 chance, and with +3, there's a one in 8 chance. But if you have low or negative morale, your troops can freeze in combat and lose a turn. Moreover, the chances of this happening are greater: one in 12 if you have -1 morale, one in 6 if you have -2 morale, and one in four if you have -3 morale. The moral of this story? Keep your morale up and never find the artifact called the Fizbin of Misfortune.



Lord Haart the Knight



Barbarian

Barbarians start the game with goblins and orcs. The number of starting troops is random and varies with each game. The barbarian's special attribute is that it can move normally through desert, snow, and swamp. All other hero types suffer a movement penalty in these conditions, significantly reducing the distance traveled in a turn. In desert, the typical hero can travel only half the normal distance. In both snow and swamp, it's 66 percent of the normal distance.



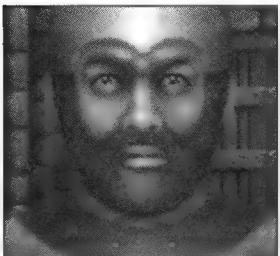
The barbarian's mobility bonus is well worth considering when you are in a scenario filled with bad terrain. Even if you don't use the barbarian as your main hero, it makes a superb scout in bad terrain. With only fast troops in their armies, the barbarian can travel quickly into unexplored territory, gobbling up resources and artifacts, and revealing key enemy locations. By the way, as long as we're discussing mobility, it's good to remember that a penalty exists for moving heroes diagonally. As with snow and swamp, the hero travels only 66 percent of the normal distance when moving on an angle.



Antoine the Barbarian



Thundax the Barbarian



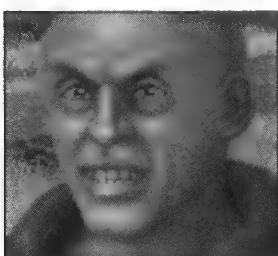
Kelzen the Barbarian



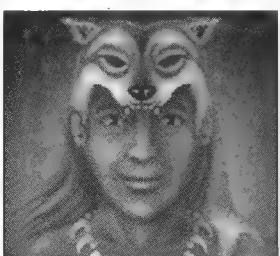
Crag Hack the Barbarian



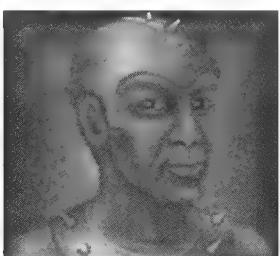
Yog the Barbarian



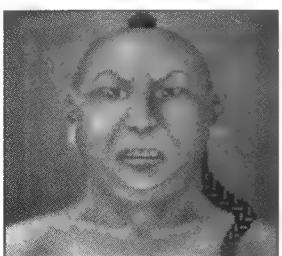
Jojosh the Barbarian



Ergon the Barbarian



Tsabu the Barbarian



Atlas the Barbarian



Warlock

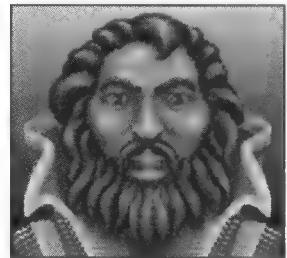
Warlocks start a scenario with centaurs and gargoyles. The number of troops it starts with varies from game to game, and changes randomly.

The warlock comes equipped with a spell book that allows him to carry spells into battle. The non-mage hero types must purchase a spell book after they purchase a mage guild. The spell book also allows the bearer to receive free spells from different locations on the map.

Warlocks also exhibit a larger search radius than all other hero types. This means the warlock can see a larger portion of the map, which makes adventuring simpler and more efficient and helps prevent sneak attacks.



With its expanded vision, the warlock becomes an excellent scout, the best of the bunch. Load up the warlock with only fast troops and when you are able, send him out to the perimeters of the map so that all its secrets are revealed.



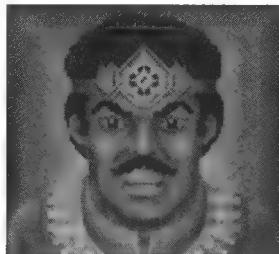
Agar the Warlock



Arie the Warlock



Sandro the Warlock



Wrathmont the Warlock



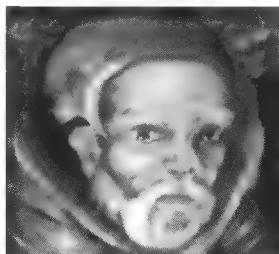
Vesper the Warlock



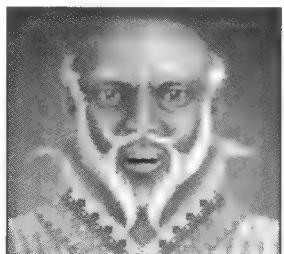
Barok the Warlock



Kastore the Warlock



Crodo the Warlock



Falagar the Warlock



Sorceress

Sprites and dwarves are the starter troops for the sorceress. Like the warlock, the sorceress comes with a magic book as standard equipment. Knights and barbarians must pay 500 gold pieces for the honor of carrying it, after they purchase a mage guild. The spell book provides benefits when adventuring, because certain locations give out free spells. But if you don't own a spell book, you can't keep the spells.



The special attribute of the sorceress is double movement on water, which essentially gives a ship the ability to move twice its normal range in each turn. So if you're playing a scenario that has lots of water that requires ship travel, such as Archipelago, the sorceress is extremely powerful. Troops can be moved quickly into attack position, new lands can be discovered and explored at a much faster rate, and escapes (if necessary) are a snap. If a sorceress controls the lighthouse or collects one of the two artifacts that increases sea mobility, the advantage increases all the more.



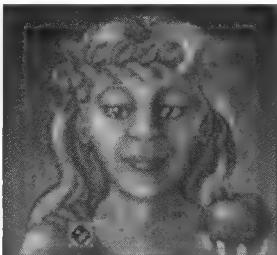
Vatawna the Sorceress



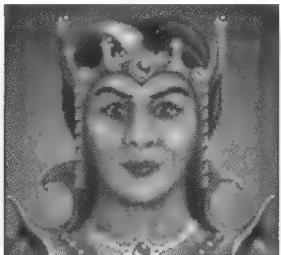
Natasha the Sorceress



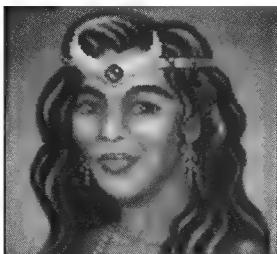
Gem the Sorceress



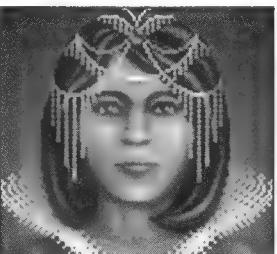
Luna the Sorceress



Ariel the Sorceress



Carlawna the Sorceress



Rebecca the Sorceress



Troyanna the Sorceress



Astra the Sorceress



Looking for a Few Good Building Materials

You can have all the strategies you want for selecting the type of hero you want, but what you need most for any hero is an army—and an army costs plenty. Before you can buy troops, you must buy dwellings—and they require gold and resources.

The following graphics show, for each hero type, what dwellings you require in order to buy different creatures, as well as how much in gold and resources these dwellings cost. Pay particular attention to the resource and gold totals for each hero type, because these can also help you decide which kind of hero you want for different scenarios. A good way to think of these totals is that they are the *minimum* amount you must spend before you can get one of every creature available to you. On top of these amounts, of course, you must pay the cost in gold of every creature you buy.

Table 2-2 Dwelling Statistics

| <u>Desired Creature</u> | <u>Required Dwellings</u> | <u>Required Resources</u> | <u>Dwelling Cost</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Knight | | | |
| Peasants (Thatched Hut) | None | None | 200 |
| Archers (Archer Range) | Thatched Hut | None | 1,000 |
| Pikeman (Blacksmith) | Thatched Hut Well | 5 Ore | 1,000 500 |
| Swordsman (Armory) | Thatched Hut Tavern | 10 Wood 5 Wood | 2,000 500 |
| Cavalry (Jousting Arena) | Blacksmith Armory | 20 Wood | 3,000 |
| Paladin (Cathedral) | Blacksmith Armory | 20 Wood 20 Crystal | 5,000 |
| TOTALS | | 15 Ore 55 Wood 20 Crystal | 13,200 |

**Table 2-2** Dwelling Statistics (*continued*)

| Desired Creature | Required Dwellings | Required Resources | Dwelling Cost |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|---------------|
| Barbarian | | | |
| Goblin (Straw Hut) | None | None | 300 |
| Orc (Stick Hut) | Straw Hut | 5 Wood | 800 |
| Wolf (Den) | Straw Hut | None | 1,000 |
| Ogre (Adobe) | Straw Hut | 10 Wood | 2,000 |
| | | 10 Ore | |
| Troll (Bridge) | Adobe | 20 Ore | 4,000 |
| Cyclops (Pyramid) | Bridge | 20 Ore | 6,000 |
| | | 20 Crystal | |
| TOTALS | | 15 Wood 50 Ore 20 Crystal | 14,100 |
| Sorceress | | | |
| Sprite (Treehouse) | None | 5 Wood | 500 |
| Dwarf (Cottage) | Treehouse | 5 Wood | 1,000 |
| | Tavern | 5 Wood | 500 |
| Elf (Archery Range) | Tree House | None | 1,500 |
| Druid (Stonehenge) | Archery Range | 10 Ore | 2,500 |
| | | 10 Mercury | |
| | Mage Guild | 5 Wood | 2,000 |
| | | 5 Ore | |
| Unicorn (Fenced Meadow) | Stonehenge | 10 Wood | 3,000 |
| | | 10 Gems | |
| Phoenix (Red Tower) | Fenced Meadow | 30 Ore | 10,000 |
| | | 20 Mercury | |
| TOTALS | | 45 Ore 30 Mercury 30 Wood 10 Gems | 21,000 |
| Warlock | | | |
| Centaur (Cave) | None | None | 500 |
| Gargoyle (Crypt) | Cave | 10 Ore | 1,000 |
| Griffin (Nest) | Cave | None | 2,000 |
| Minotaur (Maze) | Crypt | 10 Gems | 3,000 |
| Hydra (Swamp) | Nest | 10 Sulfur | 4,000 |
| Dragon (Tower) | Maze | 30 Ore | 15,000 |
| | Swamp | 20 Sulfur | |
| TOTALS | | 40 Ore 10 Gems 30 Sulfur | 25,500 |



You can draw several general conclusions about each of the hero types from these resource statistics. For one, the cost of outfitting the sorceress is far and away the highest in terms of gold, resources, and time. She is the only one who requires four different kinds of resources, which means she has to control and hold onto one more mine than anyone else. She is also the only hero type that must build a mage guild in order to get troops—an extra 2,000 gold, five wood and five ore (not to mention the time to collect it) that no other has to spend. As shown in Table 2-3, which combines the hero totals, the sorceress has to collect from 10 to 20 more resource units than the other hero types.



The wealth of resources required by a sorceress poses a competitive disadvantage most of the time. When you need more resources, you have to fight for more. If you have to fight, you need more and better armies. If you need more and better armies, you need more resources. . . and so on. It's a catch-22 that the sorceress can get away with on easier difficulty levels and easier maps, where you have more resources to start and plenty of resources to be found on the maps. But it definitely pulls her down in games played at the higher difficulty levels, where the starting resource counts are low and, in the tougher scenarios, resources are always scarce.

Table 2-3 Hero Resources

| Hero Type | Gold | Wood | Ore | Crystal | Gems | Mercury | Sulfur | Total |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Knight | 13,200 | 55 | 15 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90 |
| Barbarian | 14,100 | 15 | 50 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 85 |
| Sorceress | 21,000 | 30 | 45 | 0 | 10 | 30 | 0 | 115 |
| Warlock | 25,500 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 30 | 80 |
| Total of Each Item | | 100 | 150 | 40 | 20 | 30 | 30 | |



A second conclusion you could draw from these resource statistics is that the knight and barbarian should come to full power faster, most of the time, than the other two hero types. They need only three resources, and they don't need the last one—crystals—until they buy their last dwelling, the paladin's cathedral or the cyclop's pyramid. Therefore, these fighters need only wood and ore to build most of their armies. They do have to compete for the exact same resources, however, which can make things more difficult for each of them if they show up in the same scenario. In other words, while the warlock and sorceress are still saving up for their big guns, the knight and barbarian can be fully loaded and fighting, gaining experience points and powerful artifacts. These heroes are tough to say no to, especially when you're playing on higher difficulty levels and in tougher scenarios.



So who's better, the knight or the barbarian? To be honest, it comes down to personal preference. But there are some reasons to give the knight the benefit of the doubt. First, the cathedral costs significantly less in gold than the highest-ranking dwellings of the other three types. Second, the per-unit gold cost of paladins is less than cyclops (much less than phoenix or dragons), and paladins are the only one of the four that doesn't pay a resource charge to hire each one as well. When you toss in the knight's initial advantage on defense, in my book, there's no contest.

In terms of resource costs, therefore, the knight and barbarian are great, the sorceress has her drawbacks. So, what about the warlock? The statistics show the warlock has many things going for him. Like the fighters, he needs only three resources, and he actually needs less total resources than any of the other three heroes. Moreover, he needs only 10 each of ore, gem, and sulfur to fill its armies with every creature other than the dragon. All that sounds pretty good. But the problem with the warlock is the higher gold costs for the dwellings of his creatures and the creatures themselves. The dragon tower costs an arm and a leg, relatively speaking, and it can take an enormous amount of time to save up for the purchase. During that time, the warlock's opponents—particularly the knight or barbarian—are growing in experience, fortifying castles, and purchasing armies powerful enough to defeat dragons. If there's plenty of time and money to be had, the warlock can be more powerful than the fighters; but if there isn't, take the fighters.



How's this for irony? The warlock and the sorceress need a mage guild much more than the knight and barbarian do, but it's actually easier for the latter to buy one. Why? The knight and barbarian, because they need fewer kinds of resources to purchase their troops, can quickly muster their armies—and still have money and materials left over to build a level or two of a mage guild. They might not possess the spell power and knowledge to take full advantage of the guild, but at least they have it—usually much sooner than the spellcasters.



Now that I've totally bared my bias for knights and barbarians as the heroes of choice, let me say that some far more experienced players than I might say that I'm all wet. Because there are so many variables in *Heroes of Might & Magic*, it's easy to focus on your favorites and make a compelling argument for any of the hero categories. But the only proof that really counts is whether or not you win with your favorite hero. The game is balanced so that you can win any scenario with any of the heroes, but you might have to struggle a bit more with the spellcasters to prevail on the most difficult maps. In the end, it comes down to what is most fun to you. If you love to cast spells, then embrace the spellcasters in the full knowledge that not only can you win with them, but you will forever find new ways to win with them.

Chapter Three



Know Your Enemy

Let's get this straight from the beginning. The computer knows more than you and is relentless. So if you want to get ahead in this game, ascribe the worst motives to your computer opponents. The computer always knows which independent, unaffiliated armies will join a hero without fighting. However, the computer does not know which artifacts are guarded but takes into account that they might be. Therefore, the computer may leave some artifacts untouched.



The computer's reluctance to fight rogues or to pay for artifacts actually works to your advantage. Rogues are not too difficult to defeat, and artifact ransom is never exorbitant. In either case, an artifact is always worth the risk.

The computer always begins with the same resources as a human set on the easy difficulty level (10,000 gold, 20 wood and ore, etc.). However, the computer's intelligence affects its income. The computer's income varies from 75% of normal to almost 150% depending on its intelligence rating. The computer players may start with more structures built in their castles, or even more heroes and troops, depending on the map you choose. On the Claw for instance, the human starts better off than the computer, but in Jester or Jolly Roger the computer has the advantage.



Opponent intelligence also determines their willingness to do battle. The smarter they are, the more conservative they are. They won't attack unless they know they have adequate forces and power to win. On the dumb level they tend to throw their forces into battle—and they get smashed.



Although "dumb" opponents tend to jump blindly into battle, they shy from fighting independent armies. Why? Who knows? But it's a quirk of the computer in the easier levels that gives you more opportunities to gain experience points. Take advantage of it.

Opposing heroes ride out of their castles against you, but your real opponent, your true enemy, is the computer. It is the artificial intelligence of the computer warlord that pulls the strings of your competitors, so it's good to know right from the start what advantages the computer has over you. If you know what it knows, you can take steps to mitigate the advantage.

However, as the lead tester on *Heroes of Might and Magic* Bryan Farina puts it, "The computer, when it is smart, is pretty smart. It's kind of scary." On the more difficult levels, when you're playing at the expert level against genius opponents, it may just be impossible to win. "It's not easy," Farina says. "We had a contest on a few levels to see if anybody could beat the computer on expert and genius. I did it on Crossroads and Jester, but not Jolly Roger."

Wandering Armies

Unlike you, the computer hero knows which wandering armies will join it without a fight. As a result, it avoids costly defeats, especially at the outset of a scenario where every troop is vital. You, on the other hand, must engage any wandering army in order to find out if it is sympathetic to your cause.

Resource Management

The most difficult aspect of this game is knowing when to and when not to expand. If you over-expand—capturing too many castles that you can't adequately protect because you cannot pay for troops—you lose. On the other hand, if you don't expand and don't go out and conquer heroes and castles, you can't win. Humans tend to spread themselves too thin. We don't like to keep many troops at home when they could be out marauding.



Computer opponents tend to do both—they keep plenty of troops at home and maraud. What's worse, they're good at it. They love to send out relatively powerless heroes to pick up resources and artifacts and to harass your holdings, while at the same time, they are building strong castle defenses. Given enough time, their castles grow into powerhouses. Why is the computer able to accomplish offense and defense at the same time while we humans quickly work ourselves into dangerous situations? Because the computer knows the map. It feels much more comfortable than we do sending out marauders to snag resources (which are then used to purchase defenders), because its marauders know exactly where to go and how much opposition they will face.



Take a tip from the computer: Despite our very reasonable fears of sending armies into the unknown, we human players must be willing to sacrifice armies for resources and knowledge. You must play catch-up to the computer in map knowledge, and the only way to do that is to have the courage to explore. Every hero you send out gives you more knowledge and can usually supply you with more resources. In the long run, therefore, early deaths are not in vain.

Combat

The intelligence level of your computer opponent determines when it thinks it can win a fight. The smarter it is, the more conservative it is. But at the dumb level, it throws caution to the winds and attacks everything—even though the computer always knows comparative troop strengths. At the smarter levels, it is much more wary of your heroes and unaffiliated army camps, and tends to steer clear of them unless it is certain of victory. Certainty means that it calculates in advance that it has 150 percent of your hit points.



Smarter opponents avoid you unless they have significantly superior forces. When you chase them, they run. But when they have a hero they think can beat you, watch out. It means they are tough, have picked up a couple of artifacts or the ultimate artifact—and they are nasty. They come after your castles and heroes with abandon, so don't count on their standard modus operandi of avoiding conflict.



Intelligence also determines a computer hero's troop strength. It travels with more troops the smarter it is, whereas at the dumb level, it runs around with a handful of soldiers that you can quickly defeat. When a smarter opponent conquers one of your castles, it also knows to leave a significant amount of forces in the garrison to protect it.



Like the computer, keep more armies in your castle than you probably want. With a well-stocked garrison, you scare the computer into staying away from you for a while, giving you the time to move out to find the things you need to expand. If you leave your castle undefended or weakly defended, computer opponents will be attracted to you. You can get away with it in the beginning of the scenario—sometimes—but later on in the game you're asking for trouble, and you will get it.

Spells

Computer opponents love the mage guild. Rarely do you see computer heroes without level-two or level-three spells in their battle repertoire early on in a scenario. So, it usually pays to have a few “negating” spells of your own (Dispel Magic, Anti-Magic, etc.) to offset this magical love affair.

Search Radius

When you start out, you can see only a portion of the scenario map—known as your search radius—and you must venture out to reveal more of the map and to expand that radius. Depending upon the intelligence of your computer opponent, however, it can start with a vastly larger search radius than you. At the expert difficulty level, a genius opponent knows everything on the map—nothing is hidden. It goes out very quickly and gathers up as much as possible while you’re still timidly exploring your environs. A dumb opponent, however, knows very little of the map—about as much as you do. It hunts and gathers more carefully, concentrating on the immediate area around its castle. As a result, it won’t expand as rapidly as its genius cousin.



Counter Intelligence

You don't know much about your computer opponents until you engage them, but the computer has a much greater counter intelligence capacity, regardless of the difficulty level at which you play. Simply put, it knows you. It knows, for example, when you have few or no troops guarding your castle—and it moves quickly on the knowledge to conquer it. It is notoriously good at hanging just out of movement range of your castle, waiting for you to ride out, so it can swoop in and take your castle—it's pretty sneaky that way.

The computer opponent also knows the troop strengths of your heroes, and it tends to avoid fighting them. So if you move a hero up to attack an opponent, the opponent flees.

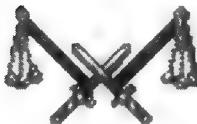
The difficulty level has little influence on how much the computer knows about you, but it does affect what the computer does with that knowledge. At the dumb level, for example, the computer still knows the weakness of the troops in your castle garrison, but it attacks with fewer troops than it needs to prevail. At the smarter levels, it rarely makes that kind of mistake.

Heroes

The developers originally intended to put different artificial intelligence into each computer opponent so they would have a range of styles. Had that been the case, some might prefer one hero type over another. However, the designers ran out of time to implement that feature into the game. So, whereas it might be advantageous for you to have a specific type of hero for different difficulty levels—for example, knights or barbarians on the expert level and spellcasters on the easy level—the computer shows no preference for any particular brand of hero. It uses anything and fights every battle as if it were its last.

A spellcaster opponent, for example, casts spells every round and tries to defeat you with sheer volume. Human opponents tend to conserve spells in battle, because they know they can't return home for a while and might need them for other battles. Not the computer. Whatever a hero has, it uses full force in battle. If you want to see how gung-ho the computer thinks in battle, choose "automatic" when you go into combat and watch how it spends your creature and magic forces.

Chapter Four



Castles and Towns

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the castle served as the center of western civilization, the focal point of an area's culture, economy, and politics. Though devoid of any cultural attributes, the castles in *Heroes of Might and Magic* definitely constitute the source of economic and political well-being or disaster. With one castle, you're a player. With two, you're on the move. With three or four, you're a juggernaut rolling across the landscape. This chapter explains the differences between the four types of castles and towns and describes the workings of some key dwellings that are common to all. Depending upon the map you're playing and its difficulty rating, there is some advantage to playing with one type over another, although this is not a hard science. Like many variables in the game, this one, too, comes down to personal preference. Each type of castle provides its own pros and cons that are magnified by certain situations.

Castle Overview

Each map features a fixed number of and predetermined locations for castles and towns. But the type of castle and town found in any given location is random, usually switching each game between the four castle types—knight, barbarian, sorceress, and warlock. There are exceptions, however. In Four Nations, for example, the locations and the types of castles and towns always stay the same.



In the more difficult maps, few open towns exist that you can take without a fight. Usually, they are all owned by one of your opponents, or an opponent is as close to it as you are and wants it badly. In the easier maps, distance or natural barriers tend to separate opponents from you, leaving nearby towns open for you to conquer and to expand into castles with relative freedom.

The computer has no bias toward one castle type over another, just as it has no preference over heroes. The computer knows the advantages of each of the castles and exploits them for whatever type it starts with.

Knight, Barbarian, Sorceress, or Warlock?

Obviously, castles are less interchangeable than heroes, which you can dismiss with a click of a button and replace with a payment of 2,500 pieces of gold. In one sense, you're stuck with the castle the computer randomly gives you at the start of each scenario. In another, you're never stuck, because you can keep restarting the scenario until you get the type of castle you prefer. It may take a while for your favorite to pop up, but in some scenarios, it's worth it—and doesn't cost you a farthing. This section briefly summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of each castle type.



It's generally best to match your favorite kind of hero with its natural kind of castle (a knight in a knight castle, for example), rather than to crossbreed (for example, putting a warlock in a knight's castle). When the two match, the natural strengths of the hero and the castle creatures support each other. For example, the barbarian hero emphasizes attack skill, as do the creatures in a barbarian castle. Because the attack skill points for each are added together for combat, the combination of barbarian-barbarian provides the most powerful attack combination. If you prefer defense, the combination of knight-knight would be your best fit, because both the knight hero and the castle creatures emphasize defense skill.

The warlock castle is a terrific place to start. It's the only castle that gives you two flying creatures early on—the gargoyle and the griffin—giving tremendous mobility in combat. The computer first attacks your army's "range-attack units" (archer, orc, elf, centaur, troll, druid), which prevents most armies from doing



major damage at long-range. But with gargoyles and griffins, you can quickly move up to attack the opponent's forces, forcing them into hand-to-hand combat and leaving your centaurs relatively free and safe to fire away. Using this technique in a scenario's earliest battles, you can suffer fewer losses than most armies. That means you can fight more frequently, which lets you expand more quickly. And he who expands fast gains an outstanding chance of winning.

The one big drawback to the warlock castle, however, is that it makes it hard to get dragons. With their double-dozen attack and defense rating, immunity to magic, high damage, and high death tolerance, dragons are worth every penny you pay for them. Unfortunately, you must sometimes wait an incredibly long time to raise the gold and resources to build their Black Tower. While you're saving for the fire-breathers, in the meantime, your opponent might conquer the countryside and build at an unstoppable momentum. On the other hand, with six or seven dragons in your castle, you usually take the game quickly. It comes down, once again, to personal style and preference.

The knight castle and the barbarian castle are quite similar in terms of strengths and weaknesses, but the knight castle may bring the overall edge, particularly if you play the game on the more difficult levels. When you start with little or no gold or resources, you must be enormously efficient with them.

It's cheaper to buy knight and barbarian dwellings than it is to buy sorceress and warlock dwellings, and the same holds true for the cost of individual types of troops. If dwellings and troops are relatively inexpensive, you can buy them faster and more of them. This makes you more powerful more quickly—and often, speed is of the essence against aggressive computer opponents who love to quickly advance to your castle gates. The prices for the knight castle's best troops—cavalry and paladin—are the lowest of all the best troops of any castle type. This provides a tremendous advantage over the long course of a game. While others, such as the warlock, continue to save for black towers and dragons, you can win battles with paladins and increase your experience at an invincible rate.

The sorceress castle can be the best starting point or the worst starting point, depending on the game conditions. At the highest difficulty levels, the sorceress castle is probably the worst. For one, the starting troops are not spectacular—sprites and elves don't take damage well, and dwarves are not particularly threatening. Later on, as you can afford them, the troops—druid, unicorn, and phoenix—dramatically improve, but their dwellings cost you more resources than any other troop types. If resources are hard to come by, as they are in some of the tougher maps, the sorceress castle can put you in a catch-up position that can be deadly.



At easier difficulty levels, however, the sorceress castle excels, because then you have plenty of money and resources with which to expand quickly. You can fill your armies with ever-dangerous druids and unicorns, and purchase multiple levels of the mage guild to maximize your hero's spellcasting strength. Unicorns are surprisingly tough, with high defense and a powerful attack. Coupled with a coven of "range-attack" druids in your camp, battles can go extremely well for the sorceress. As battles go—especially in the early going—so goes the scenario.



Crossing heroes and troop types is not always bad. Different types of heroes can combine well with troops not of their type.

Barbarians, for example, work well with forest troops, mixing speed and excellent range fire with high attack power. Knights and mountain troops are formidable because of the combination of high hit points and defense skill. Warlocks and sorceresses are effective working out of barbarian and knight castles because the mage guilds are generally built higher in these castles.

Turning Towns into Castles

Every type of castle contains five common dwellings or structures, and what I call the hero "store," the place where you go to recruit a new hero when you want one. The five universal dwellings include the well, tavern, thieves' guild, shipyard, and mage guild. (However, if a castle is not adjacent to water, there's no use for the shipyard and it is unavailable for purchase.) When you control a town and purchase a castle for it, you always receive one or two types of dwellings, containing one or two of the lowest creature types. The figures on pages 33-36 indicate which towns you can transform into which castles, as well as which dwellings and creatures come with each.

When you first buy a castle, the computer automatically selects the type and number of dwellings and troops. In general, the tougher the scenario, the less you start with. That's why in Claw, for example, the easiest scenario, you start with a castle already replete with well, thieves' guild, tavern, and a couple of creature dwellings. In other scenarios, particularly in the campaign maps, you can begin with empty towns that you must then build up from scratch.



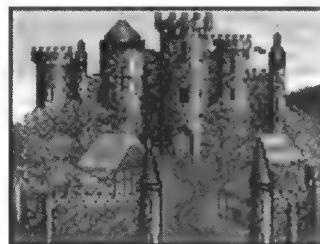
In addition to 5,000 units of gold, you need wood and ore to transform a town into a castle. Unfortunately, wood and ore are the resources most in demand by every type of hero for purchasing creature dwellings. Therefore, seek out wood and ore with a vengeance. Pick up the unguarded stockpiles. Seek out the mines, place them under your control, and leave a well-armed hero nearby to protect them from ore- and wood-starved opponents. In Heroes, as in life, you can never be too thin, have too much money, or have too much ore and wood.

Knight

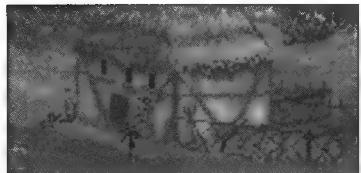
Knights begin with farmers and work them up the combat ladder to become paladins.



When you conquer a Farm Town...



...you can build it into a Knight Castle.



Thatched Hut



Archery Range



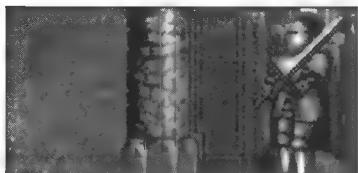
Blacksmith



Armory



Jousting Arena

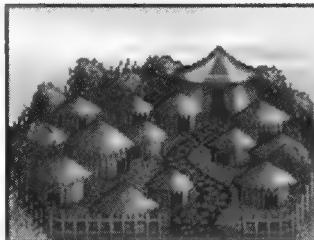


Cathedral

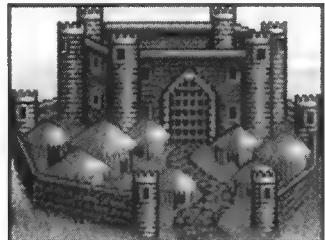


Barbarian

Once a barbarian always a barbarian? The barbarian begins with spear-toting hut dwellers on the plains and ends up with cyclops climbing stairs of a pyramid.



Conquer a Plains Town . . .



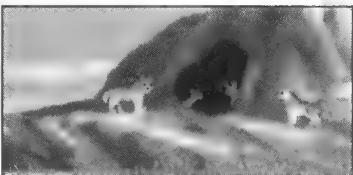
. . . and you can build it into a Barbarian Castle.



Straw Hut



Stick Hut



Wolf Den



Adobe



Troll Bridge



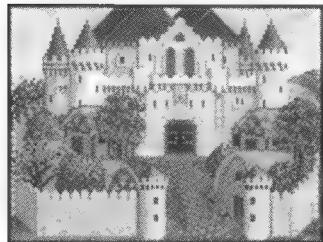
Pyramid

Sorceress

The sorceress breathes the air of fantasy and enchantment, much more so than her rugged, manly counterparts. She begins in a treehouse with fairy sprites and rises to command the phoenix in a flaming red tower.



When you conquer a Forest Town...



...you can construct a Sorceress Castle.



Treehouse



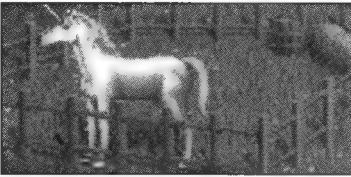
Cottage



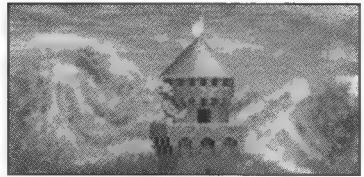
Archery Range



Stonehenge



Fenced Meadow



Red Tower



Warlock

From the craggy mountains comes the warlock. Dwelling by dwelling, the warlock troops become ever more fierce and gruesome, culminating in the dragon—the most powerful force in the game.



Mountain Town



Warlock Castle



Cave



Crypt



Nest



Maze



Swamp



Black Tower



Special Dwellings

Heroes features five dwellings common to all castles, regardless of the castle type. The well gives you a +2 population growth and the tavern gives garrison troops +1 morale. The other three—the mage guild, thieves' guild, and shipyard—serve more strategic functions.



Purchase a well as soon as you can, because it's cheap (only 500 gold units) and useful. Not only does a well increase the growth rate of every creature dwelling in your castle by two creatures per week, it simplifies the process of buying creatures after you have all of your dwellings. When you click on the well, it displays a scoreboard, showing how many creatures are available to you and how much they cost. If you don't use this scoreboard, you must go into your castle and click on each dwelling to get the same information. The well provides a nice shortcut.

The Mage Guild

The mage guild has four levels (1, 2, 3, 4), each level of which represents the corresponding spell level (1, 2, 3, 4). The first level of the guild then costs you 2,000 gold, five wood, and five ore units. For that sum, you receive the first floor of spelldom, which gives you three level-one spells to choose from. These three spells are chosen randomly by the computer from a universe of seven level-one spells. When you purchase level two of the mage guild, you receive two randomly chosen level-two spells from the eight level-two spells that exist, and so on.

Table 4-1 shows the cost of each level of the guild and how many kinds of spells you receive at each level. For more information about spells and spellcasting, see Chapter 11.

**Table 4-1** Mage Guild Statistics

| <u>Resource</u> | <u>Level 1</u> | <u>Level 2</u> | <u>Level 3</u> | <u>Level 4</u> | <u>Total/All Levels</u> |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Gold | 2,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 5,000 |
| Wood | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| Ore | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| Gems/Sulfur | 0 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 20 |
| Mercury/Crystals | | | | | |
| Spells | 3 of 7 | 2 of 8 | 2 of 8 | 2 of 6 | 9 of 29 |



You can receive a maximum of nine types of spells from a full mage guild (three from level one and two each from the next three levels), but you can acquire more. How? Build or conquer new castles to build multiple mage guilds. With each new guild, the computer gives you new randomly selected spells. Of course, you'll get some duplicates of spells, but this considerably increases the chances of getting the spells you really like.

The Thieves' Guild

The thieves' guild provides eyes (albeit, somewhat nearsighted) into your opponents' worlds. Like the mage guild, the thieves' guild has four levels. As you purchase each one, you know more information about the enemy in relation to your towns, castles, resources, and troop strength. (This information, however, is more descriptive than numerically exact, which I'll get into in a moment.) Unlike the mage guild, you do not purchase each level of the thieves' guild within the same castle. In order to acquire maximum intelligence, you must build four different thieves' guilds in four different castles. That's not particularly easy to do, of course. Perhaps that's why thieves' guilds are relatively inexpensive, costing just 750 gold and five wood units apiece.

The "inside" of a thieves' guild can be more confusing than enlightening. But once you understand what all the flags mean, the picture clears and the information you find here becomes invaluable.

The player rankings—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th—across the top of the thieves' guild chart reveal the ordinal rankings for all of the statistical variables that run down the left side of the chart. For example, if you own more towns than any of your opponents, your colored flag appears in the first-place column beside Number Of Towns. If you control the second greatest number of towns, your flag appears in the second-place column, and so on. If you and an opponent control the same number of towns, both flags appear in the same column. This can be confusing, for example, when all four colored flags appear in the first-place column beside Number Of Castles, which simply means everyone has the same amount of castles as you.

The amount of information revealed by the thieves' guild is limited by the number of castles and thieves' guilds you own. With one guild, you receive the rankings of only the first three categories—towns, castles, and number of heroes. With a second castle, the resource categories—gold; wood/crystal/ore; and gems/sulfur/mercury—are revealed to you. A third guild discloses the number of obelisks found (which suggests how close your opponents are to finding the ultimate artifact) and, finally, a fourth guild gives you total army strength.

Unfortunately, the rankings tell you only who has the most of something, not how many they actually have. But the chart is still useful. When you glance at the chart and see, for example, that the green opponent has the most castles, it means he has more income than you, which means he also has more troops and probably more magic. Therefore, you must decide whether to attack some holdings of the green opponent and reduce his power, or to ignore his buildup and concentrate on building your own power base. After all, you might need to defend yourself against the “green” attacks that will surely come.

Knowing who has the most castles is extremely useful in the tougher maps, such as Jester and Jolly Roger, because it lets you know who poses the real threat. In these scenarios, each opponent holds only one castle. You are unlikely to travel very far from your castle in these scenarios, because you are quickly destroyed if you do. As a result, you know little about what's going on elsewhere. However, with a thieves' guild, you can see who has conquered whom or who has been eliminated, for example, by looking at the castle stats. If your green opponent has two castles, it means he took somebody out and lets you know where to focus your forces.





When you combine statistics in your thieves' guild evaluation, the information becomes even more useful and reliable. Continuing with our example, let's say the green opponent is ranked first in castles but only fourth in treasury. How do you determine the amount of gold he currently has in his treasury? Since you know exactly how much gold you have, you can approximate how much the green fighter has. The possibility exists that your green foe is castle rich, but cash poor—his treasury depleted by too-fast expansion. As a result, he might not be able to afford significant garrison troops to defend the castles, making them ripe for your immediate attack. (It's best to attack a new castle, because it will take several turns to build up its defenses.) If you then look at a third variable—number of heroes—you find another clue that can support your hypothesis. If green ranks first in heroes, this increases the possibility that its castle forces are weak, because he had to spend 2,500 gold pieces for each hero and even more gold to give them a decent troop count. On the other hand, if green ranks last in heroes, it might mean your opponent spent his gold on castle defense.



When you look at the thieves' guild, the idea is to eyeball each of your opponents' flags as a whole to get a feeling for their overall strength. You cannot attack everyone at the same time, because when you divide your forces, you die. So you must choose who to fight first, and the thieves' guild is the only place where you can get a universal picture—albeit a vague one—of your foes. Formulate an attack plan here. Warlords with plans prevail more often than warlords without them because a plan focuses your resources and troops on a single goal.

The thieves' guild provides you with another important piece of counter intelligence, one with a more practical and tactical value. When you're out adventuring and come upon an enemy castle, the amount of troop data available to you about that castle depends upon how many thieves' guilds you hold. If you own no guilds, when you click on the castle it says Defenders Unknown. When you have one thieves' guild, it shows you the force types inside, such as centaur and gargoyle, but you won't know their strengths. With two thieves' guilds you can learn their "descriptive" strengths, for example, Several, Lots, Zounds. Regardless of how many thieves' guilds you own, however, the only way to know their exact numbers is by attacking.



There's another way to spy on your opponents, and it doesn't cost you a farthing. Look for the large shrine (not the small one that teaches you spells) surrounded by trees and a pool. When you go there it gives you a statistical ranking for all players as if you had all the required thieves' guilds, revealing everything. You can return to this shrine frequently for updates, but sometimes it's convenient to write down in your notepad the most important stats and positions.

Obviously, the shipyard is the place in your castle where ships are built. However, your castle must be near a navigable waterway in order for you to buy a shipyard. If it is, a shipyard costs you 2,000 gold and 20 wood, and each ship built in the yard costs 1,000 gold and 10 wood. You are limited in the number of ships you can build: 32—but it's definitely far more than you need in any given scenario. If you try to build a ship but can't, it probably means another ship is blocking the "loading dock," the area just in front of the castle. Move this ship away from the space, and you can build again.



Once you have the castles, dwellings, and creatures you need to create a cash flow and to defend your holdings, it's time to go traveling and adventuring. The next three chapters describe some of the treasures and tribulations you find along your path.

Chapter Five



Standard Artifacts

An artifact, according to my dictionary, is “any object made by man, especially with a view to subsequent use.” That staid description hardly applies to the magical, lyrical artifacts appearing in *Heroes of Might and Magic*. In the game, artifacts seem to be fashioned by gods, not mere mortals. They serve as holy icons of power that bestow a special skill or wealth upon the hero possessing it. You should follow a simple rule-of-thumb with regard to artifacts: Find them and grab them before your opponents do, because they very often make the difference between victory and failure in the scenarios.

You can find 33 “standard” artifacts and four “ultimate” artifacts (explained in Chapter 6) in *Heroes of Might and Magic*, but you don’t find all of them in each scenario. Certain artifacts in some scenarios would give the holder too great of an advantage, so they are omitted. In others, certain artifacts are useless. Who needs the Sailor’s Astrolabe of Mobility, for example, in a desert environment?

Standard Artifacts

Most artifacts, as you might expect, are tenaciously guarded by wandering armies of significant strength and numbers. Some are guarded by unseen bands of rogues that appear only after you take the artifact, then ask you for ransom. Don’t let any of that deter you. Strengthen a hero as quickly as you can, then seek out any and all artifacts (except one, which I’ll mention momentarily). From time to time in a few scenarios, you find unguarded artifacts. When you do, you often find them close to your home castle.



This occurs because the artifact serves a vital need to one of your heroes for that specific scenario. Gobble up these freebies.

Two things you should know about artifacts when you get them:

1. Artifacts are transferable between your heroes, just like troops. This feature comes in handy when you're trying to turn one of your heroes into a super hero. Consolidate all artifacts you find with one hero for maximum power gain.
2. Standard artifacts never disappear—even when an artifact-packing hero is defeated. The conquering warrior retrieves the artifacts as his or her own.



The computer never likes to give up artifacts in battle. It retreats if it looks like you are going to win, so it can buy back the hero later. This is a strategy you should follow. 'Tis better to surrender than to give up permanent special powers to your opponent.

The Fizbin of Misfortune

The one standard artifact you should avoid is the Fizbin of Misfortune. Memorize the Fizbin, shown in Figure 5-1, and run in the opposite direction when you spot it in the game. The Fizbin of Misfortune puts a serious damper on morale. Good morale gives your troops extra attacks in combat. Bad morale makes them freeze in the heat of battle—which is always frustrating and sometimes deadly.

When you wear the old Fizbin, your morale drops two points, and it's difficult to gain back morale in this game. Furthermore, unlike all other artifacts, you can't transfer the Fizbin between heroes. If one of your top heroes gets stuck with it, your first inclination is to purchase a rube and saddle him or her with it. But alas, you cannot. Therefore, the next best thing to do with a Fizbin-holding hero you want to keep is to transfer all his troops to another hero, then ride out and commit ritual suicide via an opponent. The opponent will then “win” the miserable artifact in combat.

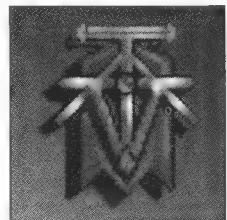


Figure 5-1
One artifact you can live without—the Fizbin of Misfortune.

Table 5-1 describes each of the 33 standard artifacts in *Heroes of Might and Magic*, complete with their name, icon, and special gift. Use the list strategically. When you come upon a guarded artifact, use this table to find out what it does for you, then decide if it's worth fighting for at that time. You may find it better to wait until your hero gets stronger. Or maybe it's better to save your troops until you find another artifact you need more. Knowing when to fight and when to wait for another day is an essential skill you need to develop.

Table 5-1 Standard Artifacts: Classifications and Powers

Spell Power Artifacts

The higher your spell power, the more powerful the spell or the longer it lasts.



Arcane Necklace
of Magic
+4 Power



Witches Broach
of Magic
+3 Power



Mages Ring of
Power
+2 Power



Castors Bracelet
of Magic
+2 Power

Knowledge Artifacts

The numerical rating of your knowledge depends on the number of each spell you are able to memorize. The more spells you memorize, the higher your knowledge. This enables you to roam further without having to return to replenish spells and puts more of your favorite battle spells at your disposal.



Foremost Scroll of
Knowledge
+5



Superior Scroll of
Knowledge
+4



Major Scroll of
Knowledge
+3



Minor Scroll of
Knowledge
+2

**Table 5-1** Standard Artifacts: Classifications and Powers (*continued*)**Attack Skill Artifacts**

Your attack skill rating is added as a bonus to the attack skill of each of your creatures—greatly increasing their killing power in battle.



Dragon Sword
of Dominion
+3



Power Axe of
Dominion
+2



Thunder Mace
of Dominion
+1



Giant Flail of
Dominion
+1

Defense Skill Artifacts

Like your attack skill, your defense skill is a bonus added to the individual defense skills of your creatures. The higher the defense skill, the less damage a creature takes in battle.



Divine Breastplate of
Protection
+3



Stealth Shield of
Protection
+2



Armored Gauntlets of
Protection
+1



Defender Helm of
Protection
+1

Gold Artifacts

Gold, obviously, is good. These artifacts work like castles in that they produce gold for you on every turn. Unlike castles, they cannot be attacked.



Endless Sack of Gold
+1,000 Pieces per Day



Endless Bag of Gold
+750 Pieces per Day



Endless Purse of Gold
+500 Pieces per Day

Morale Artifacts

Positive morale gives your heroes extra attacks in combat.



Medal of Valor
+1 Morale



Medal of Courage
+1 Morale



Medal of Honor
+1 Morale



Medal of Distinction
+1 Morale



Fizbin of Misfortune
-2 Morale

Table 5-1 Standard Artifacts: Classifications and Powers (*continued*)

Luck Artifacts

Positive luck gives your troops double damage on their attacks.



Lucky Rabbit's Foot
+1



Gambler's Lucky Coin
+1



Golden Horseshoe
+1



Four Leaf Clover
+1

Mobility Artifacts

These might be the most advantageous artifacts of all because they allow your hero to move much faster than normal over different terrain. When you're faster, you can find good things (artifacts, gold, resources) faster and avoid bad things (surprise attacks) more easily. Speed provides an advantage you use every turn, whether you're in combat or not.



Nomad Boots of Mobility
Extra Land Movement



Traveler's Boots of Mobility
Extra Land Movement



True Compass of Mobility
Extra Land and Sea Movement



Sailor's Astrolabe of Mobility
Extra Sea Movement

Special Artifacts

Only one artifact causes no direct effect on your hero. Instead, this one gives you a nifty edge when you're storming castle walls: twice the number of catapult shots per turn. This proves especially useful when your troops are unable to fly or shoot over castle walls because it minimizes the amount of time they stand outside like sitting ducks.



Ballista of Quickness
Two Catapult Shots per Turn

Chapter Six



Ultimate Artifacts

The four ultimate artifacts in *Heroes of Might and Magic* correspond to the four different skills all heroes can increase—Attack Skill, Defense Skill, Spell Power, and Knowledge. However, only one ultimate artifact, selected randomly by the computer, appears in each scenario. Each of the four ultimate artifacts bestows a +12 gain in strength in one of the four skills, so they are much coveted. Nothing else in the game compares to the advantage of such a sudden boost in power. In most scenarios, it can transmute a weak hero into a strong hero or a strong hero into an invulnerable hero.

Unlike standard artifacts that are often protected by wandering armies, ultimate artifacts are never guarded. Instead, they are buried at a different random location in each scenario. In order to discover the location, you must solve an onscreen jigsaw puzzle by traveling to obelisks that dot the landscape. Each obelisk automatically eliminates a few pieces of the puzzle, revealing more and more details of the secret location of the ultimate artifact.



The ultimate artifact is never hidden beneath uneven terrain, such as flowers, rocks or mounds—what the designers call overlays. So, don't waste your time trying to dig there, because if you do, the computer just tells you to search on level ground.



Although each ultimate artifact is wonderful, everyone's favorite is the defense artifact, the Ultimate Cloak of Protection. Some of the New World testers call it "the warm and fuzzy Cloak of Protection," because a vastly increased defense skill gives you such a clear and obvious advantage. If you can't die, it's hard to lose. The next favorite is the attack artifact, the Ultimate Sword of Dominion. It comes in second because armies with gargantuan attack skills but low defense skills can still die quickly and easily. A dead creature is a non-attacking creature.

On the spellcasting side of the equation, the spell power artifact, the Ultimate Wand of Magic, is the most popular, because it lets you cast spells that last forever. This comes in handy during battle, with spells such as Paralyze, Curse, and Blind actually working as your first line of defense by making enemy troops impotent. A frozen army is no army.

The least favorite ultimate artifact—only because most players don't understand how best to use it—is the Ultimate Book of Knowledge. Here's the secret: Cast spells such as Blind, Paralyze, or Dimension Door, and it is ridiculously powerful. You can wade into combat with an unlimited number of paralysis spells, for example, and thwart even the most powerful opponent by keeping its best troops out of action until your troops skills increase to a superior level. With a bag full of Dimension Door spells, you can accomplish much more on each turn—which adds up to more gold, more resources, more artifacts, and more everything over time.

Finding the Ultimate Artifact

The more you play the maps, the quicker you learn the location of the ultimate artifact. Testers at New World can tell you after the first obelisk where it is hidden. The trick is to spot details on the map—mountains, rivers, forests, whatever—that you recognize. Once you know the general layout of the map, you know the ultimate artifact is positioned somewhere beneath the four central pieces of the jigsaw puzzle—which are the last to be removed. This saves you considerable time visiting obelisks.

Table 6-1 *Ultimate Artifacts Power Chart*



Ultimate Book of Knowledge
+12 Knowledge



Ultimate Sword of Dominion
+12 Attack



Ultimate Cloak of Protection
+12 Defense



Ultimate Wand of Magic
+12 Power



Once you have a general idea of the ultimate artifact's location (or even a slight idea), saddle up a hero as your special ultimate artifact scout. Then, allocate some troops to your scout hero in case he (or she) gets attacked, and it's best to assign fast (or at least, not slow) troops. If the scout possesses some enhanced mobility or vision (barbarian on bad terrain, warlocks with a better search radius), all the better. The exclusive job of this scout is to go out, find and unearth the ultimate artifact, and bring it back to your super hero. Every time a hero moves into position to dig up the ultimate artifact, he must wait another turn to actually start digging. Thus, the process can take some time as you explore and excavate—too much time for a super hero, but perfect for a super scout.

Chapter Seven



The Bittersweet Fruits of War

The fruits of war always taste both bitter and sweet, and that is the case with *Heroes of Might and Magic*, as well. As you gallop out of your home castle with adventure and conquest on your mind, you visit many locations with unknown possibilities. Some bestow lucrative rewards of gold or experience, even artifacts, while others rob you of money or threaten your existence. Most offer chances for both fortune and misfortune, and you must decide whether it's worth the risk. This chapter describes these special map locations and what each offers—as well as if and how you should visit them.

This chapter is broken into two main sections—Temporary Locations and Permanent Locations—based on the “permanence” of the location.

Temporary Locations

Temporary locations consist of sites (or items) that can be visited only once and disappear from the map after the first hero leaves with the goods (or bads).

Campfires

There's nothing like a good fire to warm a weary crusader's bones. Better yet, no harm can befall you at a campfire, so head for the heat when you hear the crackle of burning wood. But since you risk no danger, you gain no great prize either—just 400 to 600 pieces of gold and four to six units of some resource randomly chosen by the computer.



Chests

Chests give you a choice between gold or experience. You can keep the gold—in increments of either 1,000, 1,500, or 2,000 units—or turn it into experience points. The amount of experience points is always 500 less than the amount of gold offered, hence 500, 1,000, or 1,500 points.



If you want to build a single powerful hero, you should almost always turn gold into experience points. You need power more than you need money, and this is one of the quickest ways to accumulate additional attack, defense, spell power, or knowledge. When you're powerful, you can always find ways to get more money.



When you start with little or no gold, the decision to take the money or the experience requires a bit more deliberation. Consider how much gold you already have, how many income-producing establishments you operate, and how much money you need to purchase more powerful troops for your army. Most of all, consider the amount of experience being offered. As a rule-of-thumb, I usually take the 1,000 pieces of gold instead of the 500 points of experience, because the latter is usually insufficient to lift me to a new level of power. Conversely, I take experience points over gold when the two richer offerings appear, because they usually give me instant elevation. Later in a game, when you have plenty of gold and income, always take the experience points.

Lamps

Don't expect Robin Williams to appear when you find and rub one of these magical lamps in desert areas of the map, but you can purchase some genies for your army. The cost of each genie is one unit of gems and 650 pieces of gold.



Whenever you can recruit genies, do so. They're fast, powerful, hard to destroy—and in combat, there's a 10 percent chance of them cutting an enemy unit in half with a single zap. Make sure you have a free space in your army before you rub the lamp. Otherwise, you need to dismiss some troops to make room for the blue guys.



Permanent Locations

Permanent location are sites that stay put no matter how many times a hero visits them. That doesn't mean they eternally bestow their gifts, however. Some give their benefits only once (Single-Visit sites), but remain on the map afterwards. Others (Multiple-Visit sites) give up their benefits more than once.

Single-Visit Sites

Heroes features seven different Single-Visit permanent locations. Each site offers its own providence or pitfall.

Obelisk

Each obelisk reveals a piece of the Ultimate Artifact puzzle, but you can visit each obelisk only once in order to receive further pieces of the puzzle. That doesn't mean you can visit the same obelisk with different heroes; it means you only get one informative visit per obelisk per scenario.



Definitely write down in your game pad each visit you make to an obelisk. As the game wears on, it's hard to keep track of where you've been and what every hero has done.

Gazebo

When you visit a gazebo, you collect 1,000 experience points from a wizened old soul. But each hero can visit each gazebo on a map only one time. You can visit as many times as you want with different heroes, but each one gets only one experience boost per gazebo.



Write down in your game pad the name of every hero that visits each gazebo. This prevents you from wasting your time with repeat visits and ensures you take a well-qualified hero to these experience-laden sites.



Demon Cave



Enter into one of these ugly outcroppings, and you get a 70 percent chance of reaping a pleasant experience and a 30 percent chance of unpleasantness. Do you want the good news first or the bad?

The good news is, you face a 30 percent chance of receiving 1,000 experience points, a 30 percent chance of receiving 1,000 experience points and 2,500 pieces of gold, and a 10 percent chance of receiving 1,000 experience points and an artifact. That adds up to 70 percent.

The bad news is, you have a 30 percent chance of being taken for ransom and having to fork out 2,500 pieces of gold.



Go for it, especially if you have an adequate purse of gold. You might want to wait until you've established a decent cash flow before you enter a cave, but the chance at an easy, unprotected artifact more than compensates for the 30 percent risk of lost dollars.

Graveyard



Given a choice between a demon cave and a graveyard, take the demon cave. Both give you a 10 percent chance of collecting an artifact, but you battle ghosts in graveyards. How many ghosts? That depends. Table 7-1 shows the four possible results of entering a graveyard and the odds of obtaining each one:

Table 7-1 *Ghosts' Chance of Reward*

| <u>Number of Ghosts in Group</u> | <u>Number of Groups</u> | <u>Your Reward</u> | <u>Chance of Occurrence</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 1,000 Gold | 30% |
| 3 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 2,000 Gold | 30% |
| 4 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 3,000 Gold | 30% |
| 10 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 2,000 Gold + Artifact | 10% |



Ghosts can make formidable foes, especially when they attack 10 to a group and your army includes weak troops. Why? When a ghost kills something, that person or creature then becomes a ghost. So if a ghost eradicates your group of 20 sprites, for example, all 20 become ghosts. You see how quickly the ghost troops can accumulate into an unconquerable force. So by all means, ransack graveyards for their buried booty, but make sure you use your staunchest hero (lots of defense skill) and sturdiest troops (high hit points), so you can take the banshee's best shots.

One more thing: Whatever you do, don't return to a graveyard you've already plundered. It's considered bad taste, and you get hit with a -1 morale that endures until your hero wins a battle. After you visit a graveyard, write it down in your game pad.

Shipwreck

Consider these tattered wrecks of old ships to be floating graveyards because they operate in similar fashion. Table 7-2 charts your possible shipwreck experiences.

Table 7-2 Shipwreck Chances of Reward

| <u>Number of Ghosts in Group</u> | <u>Number of Groups</u> | <u>Your Reward</u> | <u>Chance of Winning</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 1,000 Gold | 30% |
| 3 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 2,000 Gold | 30% |
| 4 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 3,000 Gold | 30% |
| 10 Ghosts/group | 5 Groups | 2,000 Gold + Artifact | 10% |

Skeleton

These bony relics usually rear their skulls in the arid desert regions on a map. Most of the time (90 percent), there's nothing in them bones. But once in a blue moon (10 percent of the time), they rattle up an artifact. So unless you're in a terrible hurry, take time to visit the dead.



Multiple-Visit Sites

You can visit these 16 permanent locations again and again.

Small Shrines



Shrines are to be respected, because they teach spells to worthy heroes. And what determines worthiness? Whether or not you have a spell book. If you do, there's a 40 percent chance the shrine will teach you a level-one spell, a 40 percent chance you'll learn a level-two spell, and a 20 percent chance it will teach you a level-three spell.



I don't know how many times I've wandered up to a shrine without a spell book. Make sure you don't leave home without it. It's easy to remember to purchase a mage guild as quickly as you can, so that you can buy spells. But don't forget to spend the 500 gold for a spell book for each of your major heroes.

Fountains



The sound of water falling near a fountain may not soothe the savage beast within your heroes, but it's one of the most refreshing sounds in the game. Visit this site before a battle, and your luck bumps up +1 for your next battle. A hero can slurp up luck at a fountain again and again, as long as the hero engages in a battle between visits.

Faerie Rings



Like fountains, faerie rings give you +1 luck for your hero's next battle. The hero can also return for more infusions of luck as many times as wanted as long as the hero battles between visits.



You cannot accumulate luck points by visiting different faerie rings or different fountains before you go to combat. But you can accumulate luck points by visiting one fountain and one faerie ring before you fight. This is a wise strategy if you know you're heading into a tough scrape.

Huts

You encounter several kinds of huts in *Heroes*, each of which gives the first hero who visits it each week different kinds of troops. Although the troops regenerate week after week, more troops are doled out during the first week than in subsequent weeks. So, it behooves you to get to these dwellings first, before your opponents.



In snowy terrain, the inhabitants of some of the huts change. The cabins offer peasants in the snow, rather than archers, and the hut offers dwarves instead of goblins. (I think I understand why near-naked goblins skidding around snow country would be out of habitat, but why trade peasants for archers? At least archers have their heads covered.)

Lighthouses

When you “own” a lighthouse, it gives you a major advantage on water in that it nearly doubles the distance all your ships can travel in a given turn. The good news is, you don’t have to battle anyone for ownership of a lighthouse; you just go there. The bad news, however, is that you can’t defend it. Only one warlord can control the lighthouse at a time, so if another comes visiting after you, the lighthouse becomes theirs, and the loss of your increased mobility is their gain.



If you lose control of a lighthouse, you can return and get it back, but it’s usually not worth the effort unless the enemy is long gone. Trying to hold onto the lighthouse can lead to a see-saw battle that only wastes valuable time. Instead, use that time to get where you want to go.

Dragon City

Steamy hot and imposing, Dragon City is not for the faint of heart. Inside you find dragon defenders, one in each group for a total of five dragons. If you defeat these dragons, you receive a rich reward—1,000 pieces of gold per day. As a bonus, five new dragons return and promise to defend your city from enemy onslights.



Is it worth it to battle five dragons for 1,000 pieces of gold per day? Most of the time, the answer is no. By the time you're strong enough to successfully wage battle, you usually don't need the money. So attacking Dragon City provides no real strategic or tactical value. On the other hand, it's kind of fun and a good change of pace, so if you're strong enough, why not?

Gypsy Camp

These camps offer you the opportunity to purchase three to six rogues per week—nothing to write home about. Rogues are the weakest of the four troop types that are born outside of castle walls (the others being nomads, ghosts, and genies).



Avoid gypsy camps, but not for reasons of morality nor the transmission of passionate diseases. Stay away because of the rogues you can buy there. The only good things about rogues are that they are cheap (just 50 pieces of gold) and fast, but they die quicker than dust mites. Save your money for somebody more substantial. However, on the harder maps or on the higher difficulty levels, the rogues can be useful early because they're cheap and they don't require any resource other than gold.

Desert Tent

Unlike the magic lamps you also find in the desert, tents stay around week after week. Inside, you can purchase scimitar-brandishing, mounted nomads if you have a free space in your army. You can visit the tent to purchase from one to three nomads per week per hero (at 200 gold a pop).



Nomads are fast, but they rank only in the middle of the pack in terms of attack, defense, and hit points—comparable to griffins and druids, but without their special attributes. If you have the open space in your army, if adding another type of troop doesn't slow you down, and if it's early in the game (when you don't have more powerful troops), then purchasing a few nomads doesn't hurt. Most of the time, though, I think it's better to save your gold for troops of your own kind.



Oasis

Like buoys and statues, an oasis offers a place to go to increase troop morale +1. The boost lasts only for your next battle, but your hero can return again and again between combats.

Stone Liths

Stone liths are the land equivalents of whirlpools on water. Both act as teleporters. Enter one lith, and you instantly transport to another lith somewhere on the map. To which lith you jump is arbitrary, randomly determined by the computer.



Liths provide terrific devices for reconnaissance, because they often take you across bodies of water or over far distances.

Windmills

The windmill is a resource factory, constantly churning out different kinds of resources each week for the first hero that drops by to take them. The type of resource created is randomly determined, but it's never gold. The amount generated is two units. Once a hero takes the resource for a given week, the windmill gives no more to any other heroes until the next week. Moreover, if nobody takes the resources for a given week, these resources are lost forever. They do not accumulate week after week.

Watermills

Watermills are a resource factory, like windmills, but they specialize in gold. The first hero to visit here each week receives 1,000 pieces of the glimmering stuff. It's a place well-worth frequenting.

Statue



These holy icons provide a good place for taking a breather from the rigors of conquest—especially since they bestow +2 morale upon your hero during his next battle. Unlike buoys on water, which also give morale boosts, you can return to statues again and again after a battle in order to lift your morale for the next battle.



Buoy

When you're on the water, check out one of the floating buoys. They give you +1 morale for your next combat—but only for that one combat. In this regard, buoys on water resemble statues on land. But unlike statues, you can't return to a buoy with the same hero for another boost, but you can bring other heroes around for the one-time boost. Remember to write down in your game pad which hero has been to a buoy to prevent wasted visits.

Signposts

Signs do not represent one of your most scintillating sites, but they do serve a minor purpose: They reveal the name of the nearest town.

Whirlpool

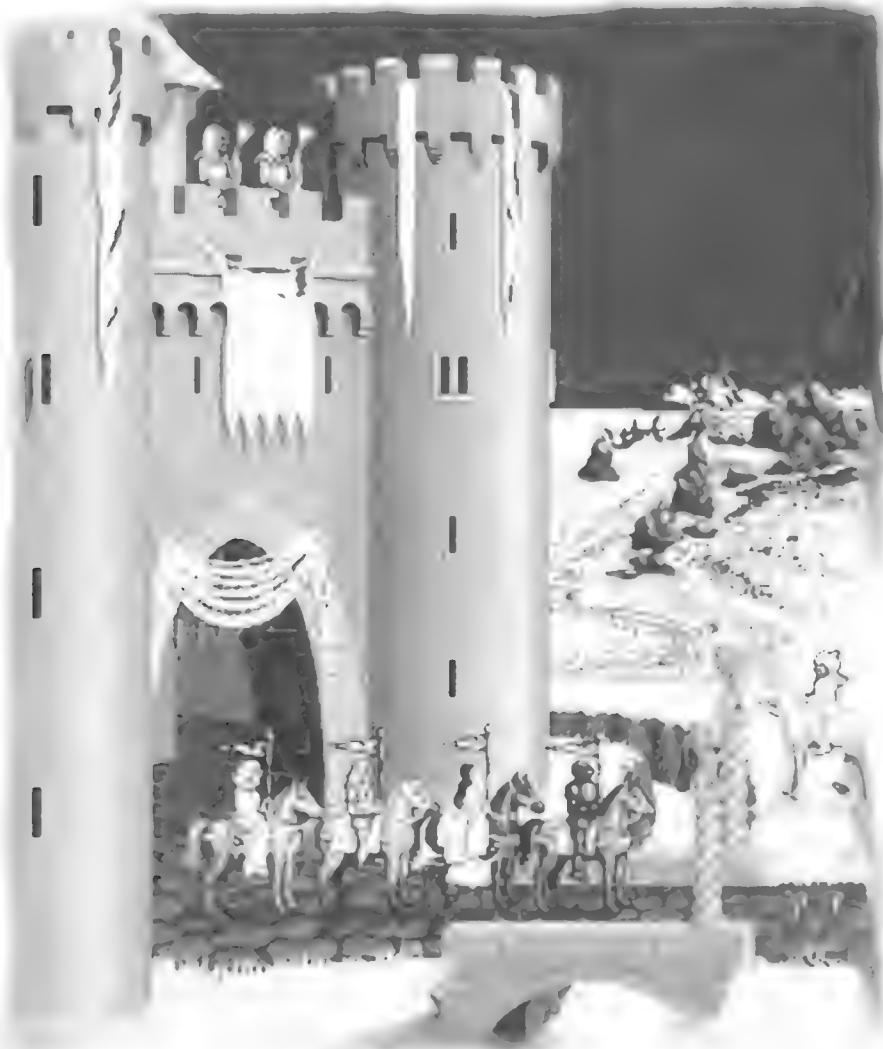
At first, these swirling holes in the water look dangerous. In actuality, they act as magical teleportation devices akin to the stone liths on land. Drive your ship into a whirlpool, and it instantly teleports you to a different whirlpool somewhere else on the map. Your destination is arbitrarily determined. However, be aware of one thing: When you enter a whirlpool, you run a one-in-three chance (33 percent) of your weakest creature losing one-half (50 percent) of its units.



Whirlpools on water prove less useful than stone liths on land, because they are usually placed in areas that don't give you an immediate advantage. They may help you move slightly more quickly from one area of a map to another, but there's also a significant risk of losing some troops. Bottom line: Why risk it unless you see a clear advantage for doing so? I rarely use them and have never felt at a disadvantage. But if one of your heroes uses one, make sure to write that fact down in your game pad, because you can only use a whirlpool once with each hero.

Part II

General Warlord Skills and Strategies



Chapter Eight



Starting Your Conquest

To familiarize yourself with the many variables and subtleties of *Heroes of Might and Magic*, start slowly. If right from the beginning you pit yourself against the toughest computer opponents and give yourself maximum handicaps, you'll get demolished. That only breeds frustration. You must think of the computer as an experienced warlord, because of its superior knowledge of the maps and your forces. Thus, it is only fair that you experience a few easier "matches" to level the playing field. To do that, select the easiest of the four levels of game difficulty, choose just one of three possible computer opponents and give that lone combatant a skill level of average or dumb. Later, as you gain a feel for what's going on in the game, you can increase the difficulty level and transform your opponents from numbskulls into Princes of Darkness. This brief chapter describes the nuances of the game's main menu, or scenario setup screen, to help you find the map you want to play and the type of opponent you want to play against.

Choosing Game Difficulty

The major difference between difficulty levels—Easy, Normal, Hard, and Expert—is the amount of gold and vital resources you receive at the outset of each scenario. On the easiest level, you're flush with everything you need to build strong heroes and stalwart castles and towns. As you move up in difficulty, your beginning inventory of gold and resources drops until, at the expert level, you start with nothing. The tougher the level,



the smarter you need to be, surviving on your wits instead of your purse. Table 8-1 shows the inventory levels of each item you start with for each of the four levels.

Table 8-1  *Difficulty/Resource Chart*

| Resource | Easy | Normal | Hard | Expert |
|---|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
|  Gold | 10,000 | 7,500 | 5,000 | 0 |
|  Wood | 30 | 20 | 10 | 0 |
|  Ore | 30 | 20 | 10 | 0 |
|  Crystal | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
|  Sulfur | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
|  Mercury | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
|  Gems | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 |



Wood and ore are the resources most in demand by all warlords, because they need these materials to purchase creature dwellings. That's why you get so many of both wood and ore in the two easier levels, and why you receive only these resources in the hard level. The last four resources in Table 8-1 are "specialty" resources. This means not every type of hero needs them—if they do, they typically each need only one—and you usually need them only to purchase the more powerful troops. (However, you do need them to build the higher levels of the mage guild.) In earlier versions of the game, you received 20,000 gold pieces in the easy level and 15,000 gold pieces in the normal level, which made the game much more "comfortable." The New World designers and play testers (correctly) lowered these amounts for the final version, turning even the simpler difficulty levels into the "nail-biters" they are.



Customizing Opponents

You may choose up to three opponents, but you must choose at least one. Your opponents come in four flavors of intelligence: Dumb, Average, Smart, and Ingenious. The smarter the computer opponents, the longer they consider their options, the more options they consider before making their moves, and the more aggressively they attack you. When a computer opponent is dumb or average, he or she is prone to making the same mistakes as human beginners. These newcomer mistakes include leaving their castles with too few defenders, entering into combat without adequate forces, and missing or ignoring easy opportunities for battlefield victories. However, when you select smart and ingenious opponents, you're in for a real tussle. They know the map better than you and possess a true killer instinct. Until you've logged a few victories, it's wise to fight the computer when it's not at its best.

Choosing Color

Battle colors provide no strategic advantage. They exist only to differentiate the combatants and to show which warlord owns which castle, town, mine, etc. You can choose from four colors, one for each possible opponent.

King of the Hill

If you select this option, your computer opponents attack only you, not each other. Thus, you become King Of The Hill, and everyone else tries to topple you. Since your opponents can't deplete or vanquish their armies in combat with each other, they can grow in strength very quickly and swarm you. This feature is definitely for the experienced warlord. When you're inexperienced, don't choose it. Let your computer foes keep each other honest while you learn the ropes.

This computer non-aggression treaty poses some limitations, however. For example, computer opponents take resource mines from each other, and they take a town or castle from each other if one of them has left it empty or incredibly weak. The same goes for weak heroes. Somebody eventually jumps them. It's as if the computer, at times, can't resist the temptation to prey on the feeble.

In general, playing with King Of The Hill makes your life more difficult in any scenario, but there are some exceptions to this rule. As with most rules in *Heroes*, this one isn't iron-clad. The scenarios are just too varied and the game permits the player too much freedom for rules to apply universally.



In maps such as Crossroads in which your opponents start very close to you, King Of The Hill makes the game extremely difficult, if not impossible. But, interestingly enough, in an easy map such as Claw, King Of The Hill can actually give you an advantage. If your opponents fight each other on this map, one of them takes out one of the others before you can break out of your starting situation. With a second castle, the opponent grows in strength much faster than you, and nine times out of ten, will prove too powerful to defeat. In this way, the easiest level can become one of the hardest. With King Of The Hill selected, however, no opponent can consume another's power base, which keeps them all at a level much closer to yours.

Choosing a Scenario

The standard *Heroes* game consists of 18 scenarios. In terms of basic difficulty, the designers label two of them as Easy, eleven as Normal, four as Tough, and one as Impossible. Believe these ratings. The Claw and Squirrel Lake are definitely the maps for beginners to start with, and Jolly Roger (with the Jester right behind) is the place to go for lessons in humility and frustration. It's possible to beat the easy maps on your first try (but it's no lead-pipe cinch), and don't expect to win right off the bat with tougher maps. Experience wins... but experience always costs.

It can take quite a chunk of time—several hours to days—to play most scenarios, especially if the tides of battle swing back and forth, which they often do. If such a thing as a “quickie” exists in the game of *Heroes*, two scenarios, Four Nations and Close Quarters, provide them. Both feature small maps, with all heroes closely concentrated. This means that for either side, little time is wasted on travel or exploration. Everyone musters their troops, finds some mines, and marches into combat. In larger maps such as Badlands, it takes enormous amounts of time to find your opponents, much less defeat them. In general, the larger the map, the longer the scenario, because it features more towns, more castles, and more resources to gather.

Table 8-2 ranks each of the 18 standard scenarios according to their difficulty description—Easy, Normal, Tough, Impossible. Additional ranges of difficulty exist within these general categories, as well. To give you an idea of which



scenarios are the easiest or toughest in each category, a sample difficulty rating was generated for each of the scenarios based upon identical starting conditions:

1. Normal Game Difficulty.
2. Three Computer Opponents, all of average intelligence.
3. No King Of The Hill.

This difficulty rating, which appears at the bottom of the main menu below the name of the map, is also used to calculate your final score for placement on the high score screen. This provides a good—if not foolproof—indicator of a map's relative toughness.

In general, on the easy levels you have time and space to expand. On the normal levels you still have some time and space to expand, but be on the alert for strong attackers. On the toughest levels, watch out: You have little space, you get no time, and it seems like Attila the Hun is at your doorstep from the first week on.

You gain nothing by thinking all small maps are easier or all large maps are hard, because that's not always the case. Each one poses different dangers for different reasons. Generally, the smaller the map, the less time you have to grow powerful—or to recover from any mistakes you make—before the computer is upon you. In the larger maps, you get plenty of time to build up, but so does the computer. It usually doesn't establish as powerful a hero as you do, but it creates several tough-to-beat heroes.



Know that in the end, difficulty always rests in the eye of the beholder. Anyone can say that Claw is a snap or the Jester is awesome, but you may find just the opposite to be true. Everyone finds their personal favorites as they go, regardless of the difficulty.

**Table 8-2** Standard Scenarios

| <u>Site</u> | <u>Rating</u> | <u>Size</u> | <u>Strategy</u> |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|---|
| Easy | | | |
| Squirrel Lake | 80% | Large | Much to explore and many treasures. The greatest danger lies close to home. |
| Claw | 60% | Small | The griffins protect you until you're ready to make your move. |
| Normal | | | |
| Badlands | 90% | Large | A treacherous place difficult to navigate. Much to be gained far from home. |
| Land Bridge | 90% | Large | The mountain passes are important. The bridge is the key between East and West. |
| Rivers End | 90% | Large | An area rich in resources and treasure known for its ease of travel by both land and sea. |
| Shangri-La | 90% | Large | A place of great mystery. Legend tells of a hidden yet inaccessible treasure cache. |
| Around The Bay | 80% | Medium | A large island of tight passes with a circular feel. |
| Desert Isle | 80% | Medium | A large desert island of mostly desert is lush and plentiful along its shore. |
| Dragon Pass | 80% | Medium | The enemy is in sight! The Dragons of the pass will keep the peace, but for how long? |
| Pathways | 80% | Medium | Open spaces and guarded passes make up this dangerous, challenging area. |
| Four Nations | 70% | Small | Stranded on this island, the four Kingdoms have divided the area. |
| Hermits' Isle | 70% | Small | An exotic place rich with resources and hidden treasure caches. |
| Close Quarters | 70% | Small | A small island where the action starts quickly. Watch your back! |
| Tough | | | |
| Knight's Quest | 100% | Large | Invading knights spare three of your towns and agree to peace talks at your castle. |
| Crossroads | 90% | Medium | You're the center of attention with little time to prepare. Good luck, you'll need it. |
| The Jester | 80% | Small | Surrounded, outmatched, and undersupplied. Can you survive the Jester? |
| Two If By Sea | 80% | Small | A small island seems easy . . . until they arrive! |
| Impossible | | | |
| Jolly Roger | 90% | Small | This scenario seems impossible to win. Can you conquer the Jolly Roger? |

Chapter Nine



The Art of Travel and High Adventure

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? In a way, *Heroes of Might and Magic* involves a lesson in balancing these two opposite personalities in the lives of your heroes. If you're too introverted—staying close to your castle where it's relatively safe and avoiding the big, bad world beyond—you soon run out of resources and gold. Then, you cannot purchase the armies you need. Sooner or later, a powerful extroverted opponent storms your castle gates and crushes you.

On the other hand, if you're too extroverted—forever galloping out to distant lands in search of fame, fights, glory, and riches—you leave your castle vulnerable to aggressive conquerors. In order to effectively go forth and conquer, you must secure lines of supply (mines, resources, gold) and maintain good-sized garrisons at home.

In other words, you must behave like a balanced warlord, succumbing neither to the impulse to rampantly attack and conquer, nor to the need to incessantly secure and defend. This brief chapter describes what you need to know as you head out from your castle in order to stockpile vital supplies. Eventually, if you want to win, you must venture out and travel, because your opponent's castles don't come to you. Let this chapter, then, serve as your trip guide *Heroes of Might and Magic* on less than 1,000 gold pieces a day. Specifically, it describes three travel topics: 1) mines and resources; 2) wandering armies; and 3) reconnaissance.



The vulture best personifies the nasty tendencies of your computer opponents. Though you might want to ride out to seize your fortunes, often you're stuck at home, guarding your possessions from a seemingly endless supply of vulturish heroes who swarm at you the moment you try to leave. They repeat this uncomely ritual each time you build or conquer additional castles. If you leave something relatively unguarded, they come, every time. So you must make a choice: Defend your properties well or leave them to the vultures. If you try to do both, it's very easy to spread yourself too thin. Then, the vultures surely will soon pick at your carcass.

Resources and Mines

Resources are the main target for all warlords during the first half of any scenario for several reasons. Power always wins; power is a function of armies; armies are a function of dwellings; dwellings are a function of resources. Therefore, if you control all the resources, you need to expand your castle in the first part of the game. That way, you can acquire all the armies you need to control the second half of the game, which involves conquest.

Mines comprise your greatest resource need. Know which resources you require to purchase all of your castle dwellings, then go hunting for the appropriate mines. All mine locations are permanent. Unlike other locations on the map, they never randomly change locations on you. Memorizing these mine sites affords you a great advantage, particularly on the tougher maps. Since the computer always knows the locations of mines, it wastes no time finding the ones it needs to expand. As you learn the locations (through experience or casting spells View Mines and View Resources), you should do the same. You play much more efficiently when you know what resources you need to expand and where they are.

Like mines, the free-standing piles of resources that dot the landscape are also permanent, but the kinds of resources you find at each location is almost always random. This means that you can find some type of resource at the same spot on every map every time you play, but the resource itself differs each time. For example, at a given location, you might find wood one game and crystal the next. Some resources appear permanently in some maps, but this is the exception rather than



the rule. In the campaign maps, you usually find the kinds of materials you need relatively close to you. But in the standard maps, the computer's random placement of resources cuts you no slack, forcing you to go out hunting for what you need.

Collecting random resources is generally less important than securing mines, unless you make it part of your strategy. Again, know which resources you need to expand your castle dwellings, then charge out very fast from your castle at the start of a scenario. The more quickly you move, the more random resources you can gobble up before the computer does. Instead of securing a mine that gives you a slow but steady supply of resources, you can quickly grab the necessary resources to buy the dwelling you need. The computer is quite vigorous about snapping up all available resources. You should follow its example, because once they're gone, they're gone.



Typically, the best victory strategy is to build up one super hero so that he or she can defeat any and all opponents. However, this strategy brings at least one drawback—your super hero can't be everywhere at once. While he's away successfully conquering a castle, for example, a wimpy computer hero can reclaim all your superhero's mines, which are the source of its power. Therefore, it pays to position one or two relatively powerful heroes to protect castles and mines while the superhero is out being super. But, to make one or more powerful heroes, you should spend resources on them instead of on the super hero—which makes the super hero just a bit less super. Tradeoffs. As in life, Heroes is primarily about tradeoffs.

For the most part, *Heroes* is a marvelously self-contained game. In the old days of resource games, you had to write everything down if you wanted to remember it, but *Heroes* records virtually all the information you need to know for you. Still, there are times when a few notations on a game pad can save you. If you cast the View Mines or View Resources spells, for example, you might encounter difficulty remembering the exact locations of the resources or mines you need. You can always recast the spells, but what if you run out? Better to write them down so you can head straight for them.



Jotting down a few notes on a game pad can help you remember more than just mine locations. For example, if you visit a graveyard more than once, you get hit with a -1 morale penalty until your hero wins a battle. If you write down such ghostly visits, you not only save yourself from penalties, you don't waste your time. The same holds true for shrines, faerie rings, and the like. They won't penalize you for repeat visits, but writing down your visits removes any doubt of whether you've been some place before.

Wandering Armies

As you venture out from your home castle, you engage independent, unaffiliated troops called wandering armies. If these creatures stand still, you engage them whenever you come within even one space of them. If you engage them, they may attack or join you, but the odds are strong they will fight. They can only join you, if you have enough room within your army (you can have only five members at any one time). It's usually very worthwhile for you to fight wandering armies as often as possible, because they provide a relatively safe way to accumulate experience points. They also almost always guard a valuable resource. Unlike hero armies, they have no hero to add troop skills and no spells to cast.

On a few maps, some wandering armies remain fixed in the same location each time you play them. You always find griffins, for example, outside your castle in Claw. In the last map in the campaign game, griffins always surround the dragon tower, and each griffin group always contains 99 griffins. However, on most maps, the type and number of creatures you find in any given location is randomly selected, and changes each time you play the scenario. The location of the army doesn't change, but the type of army does. Yet, the army usually stays within its class, such as peasant, goblin, centaur, and sprite.

When these armies block your path, there are a few things you should know or do before you charge into battle against them. First, check the strength of the opposing army before you blunder in. I don't know how many times I've destroyed a hero of great potential by attacking a superior army I didn't really need to attack. Don't get lazy. Verify your numerical superiority by estimating how many troops the army has and multiplying that number by its hit points. For example, if you attack a "pack" of swordsmen, 19 is the maximum number of

swordsmen that can be in the group. Multiply 19 by a swordsman's hit points (25), for a total of 475 hit points. Do you have significantly more total hit points in your army? Do you think there are less than 19 swordsmen in the group (the highest possible number is 19)? Then charge in.



Most of the time, you fare better by waiting to attack a wandering army until you are strong enough to defeat them without many losses. In the early stages of a scenario, you can approach this more liberally—especially if you need to get to a guarded mine or artifact you need. But later in the game, you don't want to throw away weeks and weeks of troop buildup by attacking a powerful creature force. Patience pays. Even though they're called wandering armies, they're not going anywhere.

Second, when you attack a wandering army, the possibility exists that the troops will join you without a fight. The key? Hit points. These wanderers sometimes join armies that already have some bulk to them. These odds are minimal, however. Most of the time, these brigands want to fight, not embrace, you.



If all your hero's forces have 175 percent as many hit points as the total hit points of the enemy force, you face only a 25 percent chance of the enemy joining you. If you have less than 175 percent as many hit points, there is no chance. This is not an iron-clad rule. In a few scenarios, some troops never join you, regardless of how many hit points you have. For example, the griffins guarding the pass in Claw never join you or a computer opponent.

Finally, the computer always knows which wildcat forces will join up without a fight, so computer heroes hold a slight advantage over you. Therefore, don't be surprised if an opposing hero in some scenarios—Crossroads and Jester immediately come to mind—musters three times the troops you do in the first week. Knowledge is power, and the computer has more of it than you.



The creature population of the map can change at the beginning of each week. For example, it may be declared the Week of the Dwarf, and the dwarf population doubles, meaning new wandering armies of dwarves pop up on the landscape. Frequently, you'll notice that after you've cleared out an area of all wandering armies, new ones appear. Then, you have to go back in and wipe them out again. That's not necessarily a bad thing, however, in that each time you defeat these relatively easy-to-beat armies, your experience points go up. Every little bit helps.

Reconnaissance

The computer works fast. It loves to send enemy heroes to your doorsteps as quickly as it can, in order to surprise you if you have gone fighting or left your castle garrisons depleted. To minimize these dangerous and sometimes fatal surprises, make sure to "open up" as much of the map as possible as soon as you can. To that end, earmark a hero as scout and send him to push out the boundaries of what you can see. Often times, this also means building a ship and sailing it all around your holdings, so that the enemy can't slip in by water.



At the start of each scenario, you operate blindly, seeing only the countryside immediately around your heroes. To increase your visibility as quickly as possible so you can keep an eye on your opponents, saddle up one hero with only the fastest creatures and employ him as a scout. The goal is to get him to romp around as much terrain as possible, increasing your knowledge of the land while avoiding all combat. A good, quick scout can also pick up gold and resources before your opponents do. Another bonus: Scouts can attack weaker armies scattered around the landscape. Occasionally, your scout gets lucky, and the wandering army offers to join up and come along.



Another painless way to learn more about your opponents in many scenarios is to watch the game screen closely when it is their turn. They can cruise in and out of your sectors very slyly if you do not pay attention. Several times, my inattention has cost me a weak hero—and even an unprotected castle. I could have replenished my garrison in plenty of time, but I wasn't aware of the imminent danger, because I didn't scan my holdings before my turn began. As your holdings expand, this bit of "housekeeping" becomes more and more important.



If resources and exploration dominate the first half of every game, combat and conquest dominate the second half. The next two chapters reveal the artful secrets of combat and spellcasting in *Heroes of Might and Magic*.

Chapter Ten



The Art of Combat

As a warlord, you must place yourself above combat and in it. That means you need a strategic plan before you storm into battle, as well as tactical know-how when you're in the thick of it. This chapter talks briefly about general strategy, then discusses battle tactics in detail in four sections: Inspecting the Troops, The Elements of Combat, Sample Battles, and Castle Sieges.

General Strategy

A warlord without a plan, sooner or later, leads his or her armies into disaster. The first step in formulating your plan to conquer a map is to study the map—before you ever take a turn. You can gather clues about the terrain from the name of the scenario and plan your general strategy accordingly.

Another good plan is to eliminate the sources of your opponent's power. One way to do this is to focus on mines, controlling all the resources and gold, without which your opponent cannot build and strengthen castles or towns. Another way is to focus on the castles themselves, attacking often and never allowing them to build up strong garrison forces. With more castles, your strength grows tremendously. Without castles, your opponents cannot recruit armies, and their defeat is just a matter of time.



Once you choose a strategic plan, whatever it is, stick with it. If you want to build one super hero, don't waste your resources and time building up multiple heroes. If you want to forego an entrenched defense and strive for a blitzkrieg attack that quickly wipes out your opponents, don't get cold feet and start building up your defenses after a few dozen turns. If you change plans mid-stream, it is likely to make you weaker than your computer opponents, who always have a systematic plan and stick by it. You acquire strength turn by turn, battle by battle. Each time you deviate from your plan, you lose strength.

Inspecting the Troops

Heroes of Might and Magic features 28 different kinds of troops. Each warrior group—knight, barbarian, sorceress, and warlock—is composed of seven different kinds of troops. Four types of troops are unaffiliated with any group. Three of these are mercenaries, fighters that any hero can buy if they chance upon them in their travels. The other one is the only troop in the game that can't be bought. What follows is a quick review of each troop, describing their particular strengths and weaknesses, and how they are best used in the game.

The Knight Troops

The knight troops are the defensive specialists of *Heroes of Might and Magic*. Therefore, they make powerful fighters you can count on to survive many battles.



Peasants

Perhaps the most worthless troop on the battlefield. This troop type has no special ability, it is slow, and the sum of its damage, defense, attack, and hit point ratings equals a grand total of four. Perhaps its only advantage is that it's cheap, costing just 20 gold pieces. But you're better off saving your money for a troop with even a little more going for it.



Archers

Good cannon fodder. The computer heroes attack archers first in combat, but while they're busy shooting them, you can speed across and defeat the enemy forces. Just make sure you pair them with speedy or powerful colleagues. It's hard to keep archers alive and probably not worth your effort. They offer the special ability of 12 long-range shots in a single combat, but they're rarely around long enough to use them.



Pikemen

Pikemen are like linemen in football—unexciting, but vital to the success of the team. They feature a +9 defense skill that, when added to a knight hero's defense rating, can become formidable. Place them near more vulnerable troops where they can keep the enemy from getting too close.



Swordsmen

Like the pikemen, they're strong on defense (+9) but better on the attack (+7), and they can take punishment (+25 hit points). When you line them up next to the pikemen, they form a sure and steady line of support troops for the more powerful cavalry and paladins.



Cavalry

The cavalry are much cheaper (300 gold apiece) than most troops in its class (troll, unicorn, hydra). So what they lack in special ability (they have none), you can make up for in volume. For every hydra you buy, for example, you can buy nearly three cavalry. Their main advantage is their fast speed, which makes them perfect for quick attacks against range troops (archers, druids), but their defense and attack skills also rank at the top of their class.



Paladins

Paladins are the bargains of the top-rank troops. They are the only ones that don't require resources for purchase, and they cost 150 fewer gold pieces than cyclops, 900 fewer gold pieces than phoenixes, and 2,400 fewer gold pieces than dragons. For that bargain basement price, you get a classy fighter that's fast, with defense and attack skills that nearly match the dragon. With two attacks per swing of its sword, look for any and every opportunity to boost your morale or luck, so you can maximize the damage done in any one round. It offers the lowest hit point rating of the top rank warriors, but at only 600 gold pieces each, you can afford to lose a few.

Barbarian Units

If knights are the defenders, barbarians are the attackers. Saddle them up, ride them out, and you can capture some enemy castles before they have time to prepare themselves. They lose no speed on bad terrain.



Goblins

A notch above peasants, but not by much. With their medium speed, you can use them to advance relatively quickly, forcing enemy troops into hand-to-hand combat.



Orcs

If knight archers are cannon fodder, orcs aren't much better. They, too, draw the first fire from the computer and last about as long (or short) as the archers. It seems that with their short, squat bodies they might take enemy hits a little better, but they do not.



Wolves

Wolves are one of the most unique troops in *Heroes*. They are the only fast troop in their class, so they can move up quickly. They are the only troop other than the paladin that can attack twice in one round. This ability essentially doubles their capacity to inflict damage on an opponent. Look for morale and luck boosters to put this double-attack feature to most effective use. The major drawback is a low (+2) defense rating, but a stalwart barbarian hero can mitigate this flaw somewhat.



Ogres

They're ugly, they're slow, and they're at the bottom of their class (swordsmen, druids, minotaurs) in terms of damage—but they can sure take a hit. Only five regular troops hold a higher hit point rating than their +40. With their +9 attack rating, these make for good troops to stick beside orcs and wolves if you want to protect them. But don't count on them to contribute to castle sieges; they never get inside before the battle ends.



Trolls

The trolls may offer you the best of the range-attack creatures because of their decent defense skill (+5) and the fact that they fully regenerate between rounds of a battle. Most range troops don't survive for long, because the computer focuses on them. But trolls show staying power with their +40 hit points. They're terrific in castle sieges.



Cyclops

Cyclops are only one of two troops types (the unicorn is the other) that can combine firepower and spell power in the same attack. When they turn their laser-like eye beam upon an opponent, it inflicts from 12 to 24 points of damage (affecting two spaces). In addition, there is also a 20 percent chance the opponent will be paralyzed for a few rounds. Cyclops can be pricey at 750 gold pieces and some crystal, but no opponent likes to face a dozen or so of these tough, one-eyed monsters in combat.

Sorceress Units

Sorceress troops possess more special attributes than any other warrior group, but you must offset their relative weakness on defense with the spell power and knowledge of their heroes.



Sprites

Sprites are fragile and relatively weak on the attack, but there are ways to make them worthwhile. If your morale is high, for example, you can take advantage of the fact that the enemy cannot retaliate against them in battle. With high morale (go out and find some of the morale artifacts), the sprites can often attack twice, doubling their damage. In this way they become a good first-wave attack force. They still won't last long, of course, but at least they're exciting to watch, and their death squeal is definitely the best in the game.



Dwarves

Never underestimate these plucky, sawed-off, Viking types. They move glacially (one space at a time), but they can both take and dish out powerful blows. I find them most effective in defense of castles. Your opponent must take the battle to them. They're relatively inexpensive, so load up on dwarves when you cannot afford the more powerful defenders. You get an added bonus in that if an opponent casts a spell against the dwarves, there is a one in four chance they will repel the magic.



In general, the faster the warrior, the weaker his defense. The slower the warrior, the stronger his defense. Therefore, when you attack a slower enemy, such as a dwarf, make sure to attack with plenty of fire power. Otherwise, he can block your attack and retaliate with his own death blow. Often, it's better to skip a turn with a high-powered attacker, like a griffin or a genie, when you're up against a slow and stalwart defender like a dwarf or rogue. After your attack, you're often left defenseless against their counter-attacks. Let the slow warriors come to you.



Elves

Elves definitely place at the bottom of their class (pikemen, wolves, griffins) in terms of combat effectiveness because of their paltry (+3) defense and (+4) attack skills. They can't do much damage or survive much damage, either. They can shoot twice per round, so with high morale and luck, they can get in a few good licks. Overall, however, elves prove a disappointment for the money (50 more gold than wolves and pikemen).



Druids

As one New World tester says about them, "I could go on and on about how wonderful the druids are." They are extremely fast—it's the only range-attack army with a fast speed. They can attack with power, and they are decent defensively. In battle, because they are fast, they attack first and can often eliminate an opponent army before it has a chance to attack. Druids are terrific in castle sieges if you have a hero who can give them a little defensive boost.



Remember that "range-attack" troops—like the druids, orcs, and centaurs that can fire weapons against opponents from a distance—are limited to how many long-distance shots they can fire during each combat. The druid, for example, can zap an opponent in a single battle only eight times, which means its long-distance weapon can last no more than eight rounds of the battle (less, if it gets second attacks in a round). After their long-range weapon runs out, the range attack fighters are reduced to only close-quarter combat, and their attacks inflict just half the damage.



of their long-distance weapons. In other words, they become virtually worthless. The good news is that range attack troops rarely run out of shots in a battle, although it can happen. The bad news is that one of the reasons they never run out is that they're usually one of the first to die in battle, because the computer tends to attack them first.



Unicorns

Like the cyclops, unicorns can combine physical damage and spellcasting in the same attack. With each attack they inflict seven to 14 points of damage, and there is a 20 percent chance of the attack “blinding” the opponent for a few rounds. A blind opponent can only retaliate, not attack. Unicorns are like trolls with their +40 hit point rating, but they excel on the offensive. Move them up into battle quickly where their horns can do the most damage.



Phoenix

The phoenix and dragon are much alike, but the dragon is more powerful in defense, damage, and hit points. Is there no hope for the phoenix? The phoenix’ lone advantage is its speed. As a fast creature, it can attack first in combat, before the dragon with its medium speed. (Even the dragon’s immunity to spells works against it in this case because it can’t receive a Haste spell, which would put it in the same fast category as the phoenix.) With the advantage of first attack and enough phoenixes in your army, you can kill the dragons before they get the chance to vanquish you. You may lose quite a few birds in the process, but the game is survival, not necessarily total dominance.

The phoenix, dragon, and cyclops all have a specialty—the ability to affect two adjacent spaces with one attack—that works especially well with high luck. Extra luck, which guarantees maximum damage on an attack, is frighteningly powerful with a two-space attack bird like the phoenix. One breath can wipe out two opponents at once. That’s efficiency.



Warlock Units

Warlock troops are expensive but powerful. These are the most expensive of every class, but you gain certain advantages with each one.



Centaurs

Weak in defensive skills (+1), the centaur compensates with the highest hit points (+5) in its class (peasant, goblin, and sprite). It is, therefore, able to survive slightly longer than its counterparts against the computer's first attacks. Place more powerful troops on either side of it to extend its life as long as possible.



Gargoyles

Definitely the best in its class. With a defense skill of +7, fast speed, and the ability to fly, the gargoyle ranks several steps ahead of dwarves and several giant leaps ahead of archers and orcs. Its small damage rating (2-3) makes it less effective than desired, but you can compensate for this by teaming it up with a barbarian hero with a strong attack rating. It's best not to integrate too many creatures, but the gargoyle and barbarian are a natural fit.



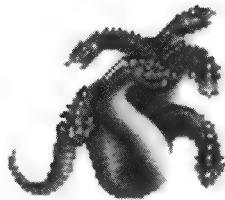
Griffins

Again, the griffin is clearly the best of its class compared with elves, wolves, and pikemen. It features the highest hit points (+25), the highest attack skill (+6), the highest damage rating (3-5), and a decent defense skill (+6). With the ability to retaliate without limit, it is a powerful bird when attacking or when attacked. A good tactic to employ with griffins is to send them into the middle of the enemy forces, but with a Protection spell that boosts their defense rating by three points. While the enemy troops concentrate their fire on the griffin, your other troops can blast away at them.



Minotaurs

This beast also ranks best in its class. Druids are faster and can shoot from long range, but those are the only advantages they, ogres, and swordsmen have over these half-men, half-bulls. Minotaurs excel in hit points (+35), attack (+9) and defense (+8) skills as well as damage points (5-10). With medium speed, they can quickly close ranks. They make a powerful addition to any army.



Hydras

Hydras are as slow as ogres, but that's where the comparison halts. They are meant to stay in one place and let the fight come to them. In close quarters combat they can't be beaten, not with their ability to attack any and all adjacent spaces occupied by an enemy force, coupled with their immunity to retaliation. Place them in the center of your army where they offer maximum protection for more fragile troops. With their 75 hit points, it takes a lot to stop them. If only they weren't so expensive compared to the others in their class (unicorns, trolls, cavalry).



Dragons

When you attack with your dragon, take care not to toast your own warriors. Once I put the combat on automatic, and my own dragon knocked out several enemy orcs and one of my own paladins with one hot breath. Of course, the dragon's fiery, elongated breath can knock out multiple enemy armies at one time, as well. Just position your dragon in front of the opponent so that the angle of its attack can blast another opponent along the same line.

One of the major advantages a dragon offers is its immunity to all spells. But at times, believe it or not, this can work against a dragon because immunity means that both negative and positive spells don't affect it. Therefore, you can't use a Haste spell, for example, to bump the dragon's speed from medium to fast, or a Bless spell to guarantee maximum damage.

One thing a dragon is not immune to, however, is money. At 3,000 gold pieces and some sulfur (not to mention 15,000 gold pieces for the creature's black tower), this long-tailed monster does not come cheap. Is it worth all the time and money it requires? The jury is still out.

Mercenaries

Can you afford to purchase these forces for hire when given the opportunity? Can you afford not to? It depends entirely upon your situation at the time. Compare the cost of these troops with your regular troops that cost the same amount, and you can figure out the best way to spend your money.



Rogues

With their woeful defense skill (+1) and damage rating (1-2), rogues aren't worth a farthing to you. Rejoice when you discover that they guard some treasure, because it usually means quick victory and experience points for you. Like the hydra, opponents can't retaliate against rogues, but that attribute gives them no special significance.



Nomads

Nomads are desert troops that look terrific upon their golden steeds with their gleaming scimitars—but their style means more than their substance. They bare no special attribute, and their damage range (2-5) is relatively small. In terms of statistics, they most resemble dwarves, but are faster with slightly higher defense and attack skills. Therefore, you might want them to join you early in a scenario before you've purchased more powerful troops.



Genies

Considering that you don't need to purchase a dwelling to recruit them, genies can be a terrific bargain (even at 650 gold and some gems)—if you can find them in some desert oasis. Their ratings are top-notch all around, very close to paladins, and they are capable of inflicting damage on a par with phoenix and dragons. Toss in a 10 percent chance per attack of them eliminating half the enemies troops, and you have a budding superstar on your hands. Buy all you can afford.



Ghosts

The ghost is the only creature in the game that can never join your forces—which is too bad, because this banshee comes with a killer attribute. For each creature she kills (regardless of its power), she gains a life (or is that a death)? In other words, don't attack ghost ships (where they are most often found) with 50 peasants or any other troop that is easily scared to death. If you do, the banshees quickly fly in to attack your weakest troops, annihilate them, and multiply like rabbits. They are controllable when in small numbers, but deadly as they expand.

The best strategy to defeat ghosts is to leave at home all of your troops with less than an eight defense rating (combining the creature defense with the hero defense). When the defense skill of each of your creatures equals the attack skill of the ghosts, it becomes very hard for them to kill you. Therefore, don't attack ghosts in the early part of a game when most of your troops are relatively defenseless.

Elements of Combat

Heroes is a game of nuances and subtleties, which is why it can maintain interest game after game. This never proves more true than in combat. It seems it always provides something new to learn that gives you a bit more of an edge. This section offers some information and tips about combat to help you ride a bit taller in the saddle as you wade into battle.

When to Attack

You find enemy armies inside castle garrisons, traipsing through the countryside with enemy heroes, and lurking inside towns, wagon camps, and other hideouts. So, before you go charging hell-bent into fights you can't win, take time to check the relative strength and numbers of your opponent. To see what's in store for you, point at the enemy icon, then press and hold the right mouse button to display a description of the enemy's strength.

Enemy troop counts are identified with six different descriptive names, rather than actual numbers. So study the following list well. It gives you the possible range of combatants for each term.

Few = 1-4

Several = 5-9

Pack = 10-19

Lots = 20-49

Hordes = 50-99

Zounds 100+

As a rule of thumb, if an army employs Lots of troops or more, you must be pretty tough to defeat them. If the opponent has "range-attack" troops, such as druids or trolls, make sure you have troops with high enough defense skills and hit points to absorb their attacks. If you have fast enough troops—flying or fast—you can reach the range-attack troops before they can fire their long-range weapons at you. When you occupy a space next to a range-attack troop, it must use its secondary weapon, which can attack only one space and metes out only half the damage of its primary weapon. If you don't have fast troops or troops with good defense skills, you can always resort to "area-attack" spells such as fireballs, if you own them.



Carefully consider an opponent's speed, because speed kills. When you attack wolves, for example, they immediately go for your throat and make a double attack, but they die quickly. To combat wolves, you need slower, more powerful troops that can take the wolves' best bite, then pummel them. Conversely, if you attack sloth-like creatures, such as ogres, you'll love arming yourself with range-attack troops that can fight from a distance instead of toe-to-toe. That way, you can decimate them before they lumber their way into clubbing distance.

Order of Attack

All players eventually create their own system of troop placement within their hero armies, and no one approach is correct. But here are a few suggestions to get you thinking about why you should even take this into consideration. These suggestions are based, first, upon the basic rules of combat, which are:

1. Troops appear top-to-bottom on the combat screen in the order they appear from left-to-right on the hero screen.
2. All troops attack in order of speed. All the fastest troops on one side move before all the fastest troops on the other, followed by all the medium speed troops, then all the slow troops.
3. The attacking side always attacks first if it has some of the fastest troops on the battlefield. If it does not, the defending side attacks first. The selection of speed as the criteria for attack order makes troop placement an art in itself.



Here's a bit more information about speed. Heroes features only three levels of speed—Slow, Medium, and Fast. Slow means the creature moves only one space at a time; medium means it moves two spaces; and fast means it moves three spaces. Flying creatures, like griffins and dragons, don't move at a slow speed, just medium and fast. Also, their speed has nothing to do with the number of spaces they can move (which is essentially unlimited); it merely sets their rank for the order of attack in combat.

After troop speed, a second consideration that affects troop placement is the attack tendencies of the computer. The computer always goes after your "range-attack" forces first. These include forces that can attack from a distance, such as archers, elves, druids, and trolls. The computer likes to knock them off first

because they can immediately inflict heavy damage without having to move forward like other troops. Therefore, you should put these forces in the center of the combat screen because when the computer attacks them—especially with flying creatures—your adjacent forces can attack them from both sides. However, if you place them at the top or bottom of the screen, only one adjacent support troop gets a clear shot at the attackers.

After destroying your range-attack forces, the computer turns its deadly gaze upon your most powerful forces. The computer also knows to attack your troops with its forces closest to you. Therefore, for example, enemy troops at the bottom of the combat screen tend to attack your forces at the bottom of the screen. Rarely do they wander all across the screen to launch attacks.

The following sections describe some troop placement strategies in combat for each of the four troop types—knight, barbarian, sorceress, and warlock. Again, these concepts provide guidelines rather than rules. Like life itself, excelling in *Heroes* combat takes more experience and feel than rigid prescriptions for action. Use these ideas as your launching point—then experiment.

Knights

With a knight army you usually find troops with high defensive skills, but that doesn't hold true for your archers, who are easily preyed upon by the computer. However, if you place the archers in the center of your army, supported on both sides by more powerful troops such as swordsmen and cavalry (see Figure 10-1), the archers draw the forces of the enemy towards them where the support troops can destroy them easily.



Figure 10-1
Knight troops in a standard formation.

Barbarian

Barbarian troops hold a higher attack skill than defense skill, so unlike knight troops that have strong defense skills, you don't want them to absorb too many attacks. Wolves, for example, with their woefully lacking defense skills, can't take much of a hit. Therefore, you need them in the center of things, out in front where they can attack fast, bite twice, and do considerable damage—especially against range troops with their +6 attack skill.



In one effective placement, you can place orcs or trolls at the top and bottom of the combat screen, with goblins or ogres beside them for protection and wolves in the center, so they can cross quickly to the other side. The computer often stations a mobile creature in the middle of the battlefield, and the wolf can take it out. Wolves, because of their speed, can also move quickly from the center into a position to protect the orcs and trolls from hand-to-hand combat.

For a slight variation, you can use speed to control the attack order of the combat. Place the medium-speed trolls at the bottom of the screen, with an ogre or goblin alongside for protection (see Figure 10-2). After all medium-speed troops attack, the slowest troops follow. If you place the orcs with their slow speed at the top of the combat screen, you create a powerful one-two attack—trolls first, followed by the orcs.

Sorceress

For a speed placement, set the speedy druids at the bottom of the combat screen, with the medium-speed elves at the top (see Figure 10-3). The druids with their fast speed shoot first, but if the computer has no fast troops, the elves follow, and you create a one-two punch that gangs up on an enemy force. Always place unicorns or dwarves beside these range-attack troops to protect them. Dwarves, with their solid defense and heavy attack, can become a big nuisance for the enemy if you place them in the center of the combat.

Warlock

The first four warlock troops, which include two flying creatures, are speedier than most. If you place the flying gargoyles and griffins in the center of the combat screen, you can place your range-attack centaurs, guarded by minotaurs or hydras, at the top or bottom. On the other hand, hydras are so slow you may do well to place them in the center (see Figure 10-4), where they're already in the middle of things and their multiple attacks can do the most damage.

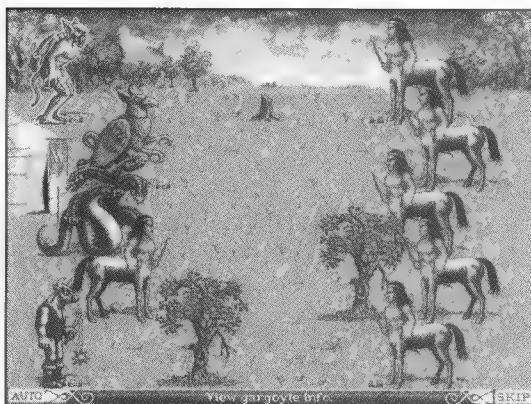


Figure 10-2

Use speed to control the order of attack.

**Figure 10-3**

The druid is at the bottom of the screen.

**Figure 10-4**

Hydras perform best in the center.



Look to see how an enemy hero is set up before you attack. When you check his descriptions, you also see his order of placement. With this knowledge, you can sometimes shuffle your troops around to make them match up better against the other's placement.

The Attack Arrow

You can attack an opponent from four different angles: straight ahead, behind you, above you, and below you. At times, I swear the angle of my attack—represented by the angle of my cursor or attack arrow—affects the power of my attack, but I'm assured by New World testers that such is never the case. The purpose of these angles is to make sure creatures can reach their targets from anywhere on the battlefield and from whatever direction they are facing. But there are a few tactical hints about the attack arrow you should consider.

The most important comes into play when you attack with or are attacked by a cyclops, phoenix, or dragon. Each of these characters wields the unique talent of being able to attack two spaces at a time, instead of one. As a result, if two enemy characters stand in adjacent squares in the same row, you can aim the cursor straight at them and damage both with one fiery breath or laser gaze. If you're on the attack, it's good to look for these double-whammy opportunities. On the other hand, if you're being attacked by these guys, it's paramount to keep your troops apart from each other.



The angle of attack can also help you protect your troops in combat. For example, let's say you attack adjacent pikeman and swordsmen in the center of the battlefield with a pack of wolves. If you attack the pikeman head-on, not only can they strike you back, but the swordsmen beside them can flail at you, as well. If, instead, the wolves attack the pikeman at a downward angle, the pikeman can strike back, but the pikemen screens you from the swordsmen attack. To get to you, the swordsmen must first move around the pikemen.

Morale and Luck

Positive morale and luck provide nifty battle bonuses. With positive morale, troop units in combat can receive extra attacks or extra movements. With positive luck, your unit can suddenly grow more powerful and double its damage points. In either case, the odds of any unit receiving these bonuses on its turn increases with higher morale and luck. With a +1 rating, the odds are one in 24; with +2, it's one in 12; and with +3, it's one in 8.



Don't underestimate the power of good morale and good luck. They may seem minor in comparison to hero skills, but in combat, they can turn minor troops into superior forces and allow a weaker force to prevail. Imagine a hero with maximum luck and morale whose elves suddenly get an extra attack and double damage. This enables the elves to shoot their arrows four times instead of two, and each arrow can deliver 30 points instead of 15, for a total damage count of 120 instead of just 30. Repeat that a few times during a single battle and the damage really adds up. One other thing: The computer never hesitates to go to any location that gives it extra morale or luck. Does that tell you anything?

Heroes, however, can also carry low (or negative) morale and bad luck, which also qualifies them for special gifts during combat, but they're more like booby prizes. With a negative morale rating, troop units can freeze in battle and lose a turn. With bad luck, the unit's damage points can decrease by half. Moreover, the odds of receiving these booby prizes with negative ratings is higher than the chance of receiving bonuses with positive ratings. With -1 morale, the odds of misfortune are one in 12. With -2 morale, the odds are one in 6. With -3 morale, the odds are one in 4.



To avoid the unfortunate fighting penalties that accompany low morale and luck, keep both of them at the neutral or higher rating. On the morale side, this means never placing more than two different "species" of warrior—human, plains, mountain, forest—with the same hero. Never attack a graveyard or shipwreck that's already been attacked. And never pick up the Fizbin of Misfortune. All of these (and more) give you morale penalties. In terms of luck, it means never stumble upon a location that gives you -1 luck. But if you do, visit a faerie ring or two before your next battle or—better yet—find one of the four lucky artifacts.

Damage Points

You may have noticed that each warrior is assigned a range of damage points—which is the amount of damage each warrior in a troop can inflict upon the enemy in each battle round. To calculate the total damage the entire troop can inflict in a round, you multiply the individual damage range by the number of warriors in the troop. For example, the minotaur carries a damage range of five to 10. That means each swing of a minotaur's battle axe inflicts either as few as five and as many as 10 damage points upon the enemy—with the exact number selected by the computer at random. Therefore, if there are 10 minotaurs in the troop, the total damage points the troop can generate ranges anywhere from 50 (5×10) to 100 (10×10) points, depending upon the random damage of each swing.



Estimating the total damage points for your hero's army can prove very beneficial when you try to decide whether or not to attack another army. By calculating your total damage points and the opponent's total hit points (and vice versa), you get a rough idea of the fairness of the battle. It's not foolproof, mind you, because there are many other factors to consider, such as number of spells each has, relative skill ratings, and general battle savvy. But it definitely helps to find out whether one or the other is likely to be blown away in the confrontation. To simplify the calculation of your army's total damage points, multiply the number of each warrior by the "average" number of his damage range. Finding the average takes care of the computer's random selection of damage points for each attack. Therefore, if you have 10 minotaurs in a troop, for example, each with a damage range from five to 10 points, the average attack is worth 7.5 points. Multiply that by 10, and you get 75 total damage points for the merry band of bull-men.



Other factors also affect your army's damage points. If one of your troops has been anointed with the Bless spell, the attack inflicts the maximum number of points in the range (10 for the minotaur, for example). Conversely, if an opponent places a Curse spell on you, the attack inflicts minimum damage (five for the minotaur). If your attacker receives good luck, the damage inflicted is twice the random number of points selected by the computer (therefore, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, or 20 points for the minotaur).

Retaliation

Someone attacks you; you strike back. That's retaliation. Except for griffins, who have an unlimited ability to retaliate after each attack, creatures can retaliate only once per round of battle. If the creature that attacks you is either a sprite, hydra, or rogue, you can never retaliate, even if they've attacked a griffin, because enemies can never retaliate against these three creature types.

Therefore, a good tactic is to deploy a weak but fleet (or flying) creature at, say, a cyclops in order to "waste" the cyclops' single retaliation on an inferior force. Then, you can swarm the one-eyed monster with your more powerful forces when it cannot fight back.



You might find it efficient to attack one creature with a large number of troops led by one especially weak troop, so the creature's single retaliation is against your weakest unit. Charge with goblins and wolves, for example, but lead with the goblins, so the enemy retaliates against it and not the wolves.

Creature Regeneration

The troll is the only creature that regenerates to full health (full hit points) after each turn within a battle. If you don't eliminate a troll on one turn, it returns at full strength for the next. For all other creatures, if they sustain damage during any round of a battle, they carry the damage from one round to the next. But if troops incur some damage during battle, afterward all of them regenerate to full health before the next battle. Your forces never limp into a new battle licking their wounds from the last one.



Trolls are particularly useful for attacking castles, especially if the castle defenses are collectively unable to muster 40 damage points (the amount of hit points necessary to kill a troll) against the troll in any one round. Because they regenerate after every round, trolls can essentially become invulnerable. And invulnerable trolls tossing powerful rocks over high walls are enormously reassuring during a castle siege.

Retreat and Surrender

Two handy tactical decisions you can make in combat are Retreat and Surrender. With either decision, your hero returns to your hero pool and you “lose” the battle—but these tactics may help you win the war. Since you never know exactly how powerful an opposing hero is until you attack him, you sometimes find yourself in David-and-Goliath conflicts you have no business being in. Several times in the confusion of a crowded battlefield, I’ve mistakenly attacked an opponent I knew was far more powerful than I. In times like these, there’s no shame in running like a scared rabbit.

If you retreat or surrender, you can return to any castle you own and buy back your hero. Eventually, if you do not reclaim him (or her), he moves into the general hero pool, and any of your opponents can purchase him. That’s something you always want to avoid. So, after you retreat or surrender, buy the fallen hero as soon as you can.

Retreat

When you choose to retreat, you permanently lose all of your creature forces, but your hero maintains whatever artifacts, skills, and experience you have acquired. The hero returns to your hero pool, but you must buy him again in order to reclaim him.



If your opponent picks up or possesses an artifact, the computer hero always retreats from a battle if it can. One of the tricks to this game is learning how to kill an artifact-bearing hero before it retreats. To do that, you need to know the speed of both your and your opponent's creatures, and you need some key spells—namely Blind, Paralyze, Lightning Bolts, or Storm. Because creature speed



determines the order of attack in combat, you must kill the opponent's fastest creature in each round, thereby enabling you to attack first in that round. When you attack first, you can use the spells to stymie your opponent while you methodically destroy it—and before it has the opportunity to run away with its artifact intact.

A good strategy for conquering a quick-retreating opponent is to stock your hero with fast-moving armies. Remember, all fast armies attack first, then all medium-speed armies, and so on. Therefore, if you can quickly kill an opponent's fast army, you then face only medium-speed armies you can subdue with clustered spellcasts and attacks from your fast armies.



Use the computer's strategy. If it looks like you might lose and you hold even one artifact, by all means, retreat. If you continue fighting, you lose your troops anyway, so cut your losses and keep the artifact securely in your possession.

Surrender

Surrendering differs from retreating in that with surrender, you pay money to your opponent in order to keep your troops along with whatever artifacts and experience you have acquired. The ransom consists of half the cost of all your troops. At one point in the game's development, the opponent had to agree to allow you to surrender or you had to continue fighting. Now, it's a done deal as soon as you raise the white flag and pay your ransom.

The computer never surrenders, but in certain situations, it is a superior strategy to retreating. If, for example, you have plenty of money, a hero with a large army, and you don't want your hero to be squashed by a clearly superior foe (who will also gain considerable experience points in the process), surrender. If you retreat, you lose the army, it could take weeks and weeks to get it back, and you must pay the full cost to replenish it. On the other hand, if you surrender, you pay only half the replacement cost and you waste no time. You're free to return and fight another day.

Sample Battles

The computer juggles many variables and numbers during combat. Attack points, skill points, experience points, damage points, hit points, spell effects, morale, and luck—all these and more for both opponents are jumbled together.

Eventually, somebody wins, and somebody loses. You could go a little crazy trying to track all the number crunching in a battle (that's what computers are for), but it's helpful to have a basic idea of how winners are actually calculated.

To illustrate the process, I've created two sample battles. Unnecessary complexity has been weeded out in both. In each battle, for example, there are just two creature types, one against the other. Obviously, you rarely see such a situation. Armies usually travel with five different creature types in their ranks. But the idea here is to give you a feel for why someone wins a battle, not to have you grab your abacus every time you ride out for fame and glory.

Sample Battle #1

The first battle features 10 wolves against 10 wolves. Each pack of wolves travels with a barbarian hero with standard starting attack and defense skills.

When you factor in the attack (+2) and defense (+1) skills of the barbarian heroes with those of the wolves, their final attack skill is +8 and their final defense skill is +3. The average damage points for both sides is four (the average of the numbers 3, 4, and 5), so the total amount of damage that either side can inflict on the other is approximately 40 points (10 troops \times 4).

Table 10-1 Sample Battle #1

| Skill | Wolf A | Wolf B |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Hit Points | 20 | 20 |
| Speed | Fast | Fast |
| Attack | 6 (2) | 6 (2) |
| Defense | 2 (1) | 2 (1) |
| Damage | 3-5 | 3-5 |

When a wolf attacks another wolf, it sets up a +8 attack versus a +3 defense, which gives the attacking wolf an advantage of five points over the defense. In *Heroes*, you receive approximately 10 percent more damage for every attack point that is more than the defense points. In this case, with five extra attack points, the attack wolf would

inflict 50 percent more damage ($5 \times 10\%$) than with no extra points. Therefore, because the damage would be about 40 points without extra attack points, the total damage is actually closer to 60 points ($40 \text{ points} + [50\% \text{ of } 40] = 60$).



In general, if the difference between the attack and defense points is three or less, the creature with the most hit points wins. But when the difference climbs above four or five points, other factors come into play.



In this sample battle pitting wolf against wolf with exactly matching statistics, the attacking wolf eventually wins (but only after absorbing terrific losses) because the attacking wolf goes first, giving him the last bite, so to speak. The next sample actually takes a battle through every round.

Sample Battle #2

This sample battle features one swordsmen attacking one ogre, each traveling with inexperienced heroes of their same type who have the defense and attack skills they start the game with.

Table 10-2 Sample Battle #2

| <u>Skill</u> | <u>Ogre</u> | <u>Swordsmen</u> |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Hit Points | 40 | 25 |
| Speed | Slow | Medium |
| Attack | 9 (2) | 7 (1) |
| Defense | 5 (1) | 9 (2) |
| Damage | 4-6 | 4-6 |

In this battle, one rookie swordsman attacks one rookie ogre. The swordsman carries a seven attack rating and a nine defense rating. Since the inexperienced knight hero he travels with has a +1 attack level and a +2 defense level, the swordsman holds an actual rating of eight attack and 11 defense. Pretty good numbers.

The rookie ogre, on the other hand, has an actual rating of 11 attack and six defense. The attack rating is calculated by combining the ogre's base attack (9) with the barbarian hero's attack level (+2). The defense rating is the sum of the ogre's base defense (5) and the barbarian hero's defense (1).

When you look at these comparative numbers . . .

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Swordsman | 8 attack | 11 defense |
| Ogre | 11 attack | 6 defense |

. . . it may not be readily apparent which force is superior and will prevail. If anything, it seems the swordsman might win because of his large advantage on defense. This is where many novice players stop their analysis and plunge into battle, but the experienced player need more information before racing into combat.

Next, you should look at damage points. The damage each hero can inflict on the other is the same, a range from four to six points, averaging five points. Therefore, when the ogre attacks the swordsman, it probably will inflict only five points of damage. Why? Because the difference between the ogre's attack (11) and the swordsman's defense (11) is zero, thus the ogre gets no 10 percent per-point damage bonus. With no bonus, its attack can only equal its base damage, or five points.

When the swordsman attacks the ogre, however, the swordsman does receive a damage bonus of two points, the difference between the swordsman's attack (8) and the ogre's defense (6). The sum of the swordsman's average damage (5) plus the bonus (2) equals seven, which means that each flail of the sword inflicts seven damage points against the ogre. Since that amounts to two more points than the ogre's attack, the swordsman might gain the upper hand in this battle.

Hold on. There's one more statistic that needs to go into the equation: hit points, the amount of damage a creature can absorb before it croaks. In this case, the swordsman has 25 hit points, and the ogre has 40 hit points. The big, bearded guy can withstand 15 more damage points than the swordsman. This means that in the long run, the ogre is going to win this fight. The following blow-by-blow account of each round of the battle shows how this can happen.

Round 1

- U The swordsman attacks first, because with his medium speed, the ogre is slow. Swordsman inflicts seven damage points on the ogre. The ogre loses seven hit points from its total of 40, leaving him with 33 remaining points.
- U The ogre takes his one allowable retaliation per battle, inflicting five damage points on the swordsman. The swordsman loses five hit points, leaving him with 20.
- U The ogre takes its first turn, inflicting another five damage points on the swordsman, reducing the knight's hit points to 15.
- U The swordsman retaliates, inflicting seven more damage points, reducing the ogre's hit point total to 28.

Round 2

- U The swordsman attacks for the second time. The ogre's hit points fall to 23.
- U The ogre attacks for the second time. The swordsman's hit points fall to 10.

Round 3

The swordsman attacks for the third time. Ogre hit points drop to 16.

Ogre attacks for the third time. Swordsman hit points plunge to a mere five.

Round 4

- U Swordsman executes his fourth attack, slicing the ogre's hit points to nine.
- U Ogre launches his fourth and final attack, reducing the swordsman's hit points to zero and killing him. Final score: Swordsman dead as a door nail; Ogre 9 hit points and the victor.



Of course, you can toss even more variables into the equation to make it hopelessly complex. No spells were cast in this battle. Luck and morale were neutral. Both heroes had no experience. There were no supporting troops to muddle the arithmetic with their damage points. This sample does show the incredible nuances that exist in battles. What at first glance seems like a cut-and-dry victory for the swordsman actually becomes a narrow victory for the ogre. It clearly shows the importance of launching the first attack. The margin of the ogre's victory would have doubled if it had struck the first attack. As it was, the swordsman was just one blow away from victory when he succumbed.

As you grow in combat experience, you start to get a feel for these numbers. Don't worry about them too much. Just remember that your attack skill should be larger than your opponent's defense skill, multiply the difference by 10 percent, then add that percentage to the damage you inflict without it. Pretty soon, it becomes automatic.

Castle Sieges

Castle sieges can be a risky business because castles feature two ways to increase their defensive strength: castle walls and the castle ballista. The attacking army, however, receives additional offensive support from only one source: a catapult.

Keeping a Hero in Castle

If you have a hero inside the castle when it is attacked, the hero's troops, rather than the normal castle garrison troops, defend the castle. If the hero employs less than five kinds of troops in his army, garrison troops automatically fill in the empty spaces. The first garrison troop to be so recruited is the one that occupies the far-left position place on the castle screen; the second troop selected is the next troop to the right, and so on. Get into the habit of placing the most powerful troops of your garrison force in this left-to-right order, so that if you need extra defenders, the fill-ins are crack troops instead of cannon fodder. If it becomes habit, you won't forget to do it when it counts.



Always keep a hero inside the castle when you know you're about to be attacked. Then, transfer as many troops as you can from the garrison forces into the hero's forces. Not only does the castle gain extra defenders this way, but the garrison defenders acquire extra attack and defense points from the hero. Stationing a powerful hero inside your castle can transform even relatively weak troops into true defenders.

Castle Walls

The walls of the castle are its first line of defense. The castle wall provides an additional +4 defense for every garrison troop against the attacks of range creatures—which significantly reduces their ability to damage the castle troops from a distance. So, for example, if a druid on the outside shoots an archer on the inside, the archer's defense skill jumps from three to seven (maybe higher, if a hero stands inside the castle, as well), which equals the base attack skill of the druid. The druid inflicts some damage, but not nearly as much as without the defensive boost from the walls.

Castle walls do pose their limitations, however. First, as they start to crumble from the catapult's attacks, the defensive bonus starts to decline from +4, and if any range-attack unit fires through an opening in the wall, defense drops to nothing. Second, the walls offer no resistance to creatures that can fly over its walls. If a griffin flies over to attack an archer, the archer receives no defensive bonus from the walls.

The Castle Ballista

Think of the ballista, located in the tall tower, as another warrior in your castle garrison—but one that is all offense and no defense. An opponent cannot silence the ballista, except by killing every organic warrior in the castle. The ballista is always your first attack in every round of battle. The ballista's effectiveness depends upon two things: the number of dwellings or structures you purchase for your castle (which modifies its damage rating) and the number of mage guild levels you acquire (which modifies its attack skill level).



If your opponent has only one army left in its castle and you paralyze that army, the castle ballista does not fire. The castle ballista can't fire until a new round begins, but a paralyzed army can't attack, so there is no new round for it. Therefore, you can paralyze the army and attack it again. This is an effective way to prevent enemy heroes from retreating, so you can capture any artifacts they may have.

When the ballista fires at an enemy warrior, its attack number is automatically compared to the warrior's defense level (as in all engagements). If the ballista's attack level is higher, it receives the standard 10 percent bonus for each additional point, which is then added to the base damage rating. This gives



you the amount of damage inflicted upon the enemy warrior. All you need to know is that the ballista is extremely powerful, and its damage is severe. If you're on the receiving end of its attack, the only way to neutralize the power of the ballista is with a super-high defense skill. (Another reason why it's beneficial to use knights, who favor defense strength, on the attack.)



What can you do when you're defending a castle against overwhelming odds? If you can destroy the opponent's fast creatures and the opponent has wasted most of its spells—and if you have sprites or gargoyles—you can have them fly around the outside of the screen away from the slower attacking forces. Then, the castle ballista picks them off, round by round. However, if the attacking forces possess high morale and attack you twice, this ploy doesn't work.

The Catapult

The attacker holds only one special weapon: the catapult, the only weapon that can breach an a castle's walls. The catapult fires one missile at the castle every round (unless you have the artifact called the Ballista of Quickness, which gives it two shots per round). It is the attacking army's first attack of every round. The catapult fires at the wall in a random fashion, and it usually takes two hits in a single section of the wall to bring it down. (Sometimes, it seems that the catapult blows up the wall on a single shot more often when it's working for a computer opponent, but the occurrence is truly random.) The catapult needs to fire at least one and no more than six shots to bring down one section of a wall. Most of the time, the actual number is four or less.



When you attack a castle, definitely bring troops that can fire from long distance or can fly over the castle walls. You benefit more from flying troops, because they are unaffected by the defensive bonus of the castle walls. Without the ability to attack before the walls come tumbling down, your troops become sitting ducks for the castle forces. The best troops to have on a siege, of course, are dragons and phoenixes, but you need to know about these birds and castles. Because they attack two spaces at a time, there must be two adjacent spaces open inside the castle before they can fly over the walls and land inside. Use another troop to clear out a landing area by eliminating one enemy troop.



Attack and defense, of course, form but one part of the combat picture. In Chapter 11, we take a look at the more subtle—but still incredibly powerful—art of casting spells in battle. Sorceresses and warlocks may get short-changed in most parts of this book, but in the next chapter, they shine.

Chapter Eleven

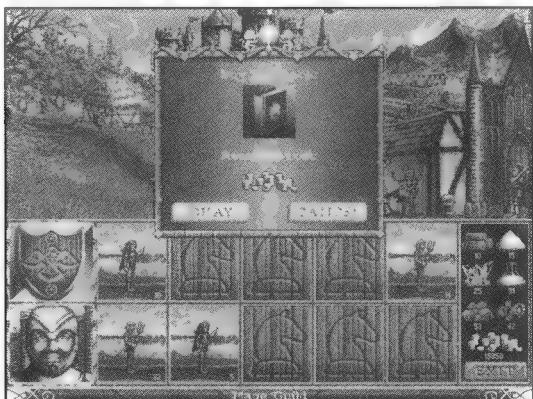


The Art of Spellcasting

Spellcasters unite! Here you discover how warlocks and sorceresses can gain the upper hand on their more bloodthirsty knight and barbarian counterparts. The keys to spellcasting ability are spell power (how powerful the spell you cast is and how long it lasts) and spell knowledge (how many spells you can remember at one time). The warlock and sorceress share an affinity for both, and as you read the descriptions for each of the spells in *Heroes of Might and Magic*, you see that the wizards wield many unseen powers.

You don't need all four levels of a mage guild to effectively use wizardry. The first level of a mage guild provides enough enchantment to give you a Dispel Magic or Bless—something that can cancel out a negative spell cast upon you. That's a big advantage if you're a knight or barbarian going up against another knight or barbarian with limited spells. Against a professional spell caster, however, this technique doesn't last forever, but it can give you time to move your superior attack and defense forces forward to engage the enemy.



**Figure 11-1**

Knights and barbarians must purchase a spell book.

Misfortune, a spell book cannot be transferred between heroes. Unlike all the other artifacts, a spell book cannot be won in battle.

The Spell Book

A spell book gives a hero the ability to possess spells and to carry them into battle. The spellcasting heroes, the warlock and sorceress, automatically come with a spell book when you purchase them. However, the pugilists, the knights and barbarians, must purchase one for 500 gold after they purchase the first level of a mage guild. You can consider the spell book an artifact, because it appears with the artifacts on your hero screen. Like the artifact known as the Fizbin of

Spell Power

A hero's spell power determines one of two things: how powerful the effect is of any spell the hero casts in battle, or how long (how many attack rounds) a spell lasts in battle. For example, if your hero has a spell power of three and casts a Lightning Bolt onto a paladin, the spell power (3) is multiplied by the spell's damage points (25). Therefore, you can inflict 75 damage points upon the paladin. If you cast a duration spell, such as Anti-Magic, upon one of your own troops, it protects that troop from all spells for three attack rounds in that battle. On the fourth round, the spell is automatically removed.

Spell Knowledge

Knowledge comprises the number of each spell in your mage guild that your hero can memorize—and therefore, take into combat. If you have a knowledge rating of five, for example, then you can hold five of each spell available to you. Knowledge is a vital companion attribute to spell power. You don't benefit much if you have a super high spell power when you can carry only one of each spell at a time. If you can "remember" 10 Blind and 10 Paralyze spells at a time, you can stymie the most powerful troops in any enemy army, while you eliminate all the others and close in for the kill.

The Insider's Guide to All Spells

Spell by spell, level by level, this chapter describes each of the spells in *The Heroes of Might and Magic*, and tells you the best times and circumstances to use them. For each of the four levels of spells, the spells are divided into combat spells and adventure spells.

Level I Combat Spells

Bless

Cast this spell upon one of your troops, and they will inflict maximum damage. If you bless an ogre, for example, which has a damage range of four to six points, it inflicts six points of damage on every attack until the spell runs out.

This spell becomes extremely effective if you have good luck, because good luck doubles the damage you can inflict. Thus, the blessed ogre inflicts 12 points of damage, instead of just six points if it has good luck.

Use Bless on your fast troops, which can cross quickly to the other side and inflict significant damage right at the start of a battle—say against your opponent’s range attack troops. Unless you cast it for a certain attack, you waste Bless on slow troops, because they may die before they reach your opponents.

For maximum efficiency, cast Bless when you have a significantly high spell power, because that determines how many attack rounds it lasts during a battle, and apply it to troops that inflict a wide range of damage. It’s best to use it with high damage-range troops, such as phoenix (20 to 40 points) or at least cavalry (five to 10 points).

Curse

Curse works exactly like Bless, but in reverse. When you cast it on enemy troops, it makes the troops inflict the minimum amount of damage of which they are capable. It works best against the same troops that Bless works best for—those with the highest damage point differential. A curse on an enemy phoenix, which gives it only 20 points of damage instead of 40 points, is a blessing on you when it attacks.

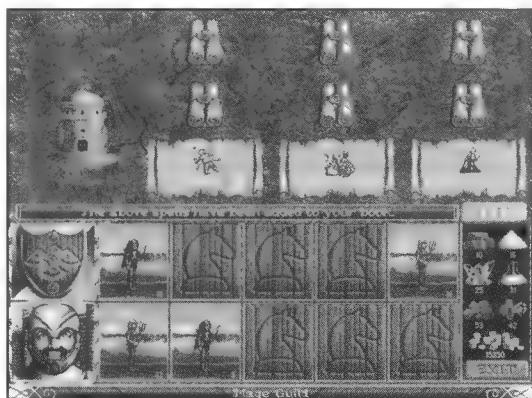


Figure 11-2

Spells have been added to the knight’s spell book.

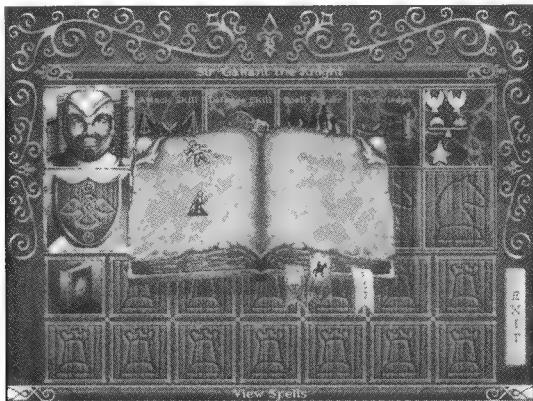


Figure 11-3

Sir Gallant is viewing his combat spells.

its spells (such as Dispel Magic). If the computer is using its spells to neutralize your spells, it won't be able to kill you with Fireballs and Lightning Bolts.

Dispel Magic

The universal elixir, Dispel Magic removes all spells on all troops, on both sides of the battle lines. It's always effective, but it's most beneficial when you're under the enchantments of Blind or Paralyze, especially if you're opponent has a high spell power. When your troops are frozen by these spells, and it's going to take you 3 or 4 turns to be rid of them, Dispel Magic comes in mighty handy.

Protection

A good, general, all-around spell, Protection gives any of your troops a +3 boost in defense skill. Try using it on your archers or range attack troops that you want to keep alive and the computer wants so much to destroy first. If you make them harder to kill, they will last a little longer, and that gives your other troops time to move into attack position.

Protection is especially beneficial on a troll, not only because it boosts its base defense from 5 to 8, but because it reduces the amount of damage that the troll absorbs—which increases its chances for regeneration each round. For example, during a castle siege, the castle ballista would often concentrate its fire upon a troll because of its range attack ability. Because the ballista's damage usually hovers around 40 points, it could knock off a troll in each round because trolls have 40 hit points. But with a +3 defense bonus, Protection could reduce the amount of damage that the ballista inflicts on the troll, so that it can't be killed in a single

Use Curse early in a battle against an opponent's range attack troops. This makes them unable to inflict as much damage upon you, enabling you to move your slower troops into attack position with a greater survival rate. If you attack first in battle, this is a good spell to cast upon the speediest and strongest troops of the opposition to minimize their threat. The computer doesn't like a Curse on any of its troops and will use magic to remove it, so Curse is good for making the computer waste some of

attack. If it can't be killed in a single attack, it regenerates, and you have the best kind of range attack weapon you can possibly have—one that will never die.

Slow

Slow works in two ways against an enemy troop. First it reduces the troop's speed to slow, which means it can move only one space at a time. Secondly, it makes the troop attack last. Therefore, the phoenix, which can fly as many spaces as it wants, and which attacks first because it is fast, suddenly moves like a sluggish ogre when it's under the Slow spell. And that gives you the opportunity to attack the phoenix many times with archers or range attack troops before it can attack you.

If you like to play *Heroes* by calculating the speed of the troops in battle so that you can control the order of attack, you can really throw your opponent's order of attack into chaos with Slow. For example, if the enemy has one fast troop and you have three, and you want all of yours to attack before any of his do, you can slow his troop so that it will move last.

Slow is a good spell to use when you want to cancel a beneficial spell that's helping an enemy troop. A rule of spelldom is that a troop can be under the effect of only one spell at a time, and any new spell cast cancels the old one. So if an enemy griffin is flying around with a Bless spell, you can hit it with a Slow spell and cancel the Bless—clipping its wings at the same time. And Slow obviously works wonders on an opponent under a Haste spell, slowing them down to a crawl.

Level I Adventure Spells

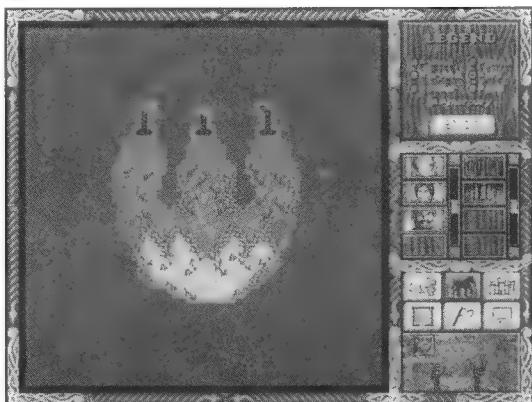
View Mines and View Resources

Most players consider these spells to be second-class magic to more exotic and exciting incantations such as Berserk or Fireball, but they definitely have their place. If you are unfamiliar with the maps, which you certainly are the first few times you play them, you are at a major disadvantage. The computer knows where it's going and where the resources are that it needs.



Figure 11-4

Here, Sir Gallant views his adventure spells.

**Figure 11-5**

Sir Gallant has casted his View Resource spell.

more resources—and more kinds of resources—than do the knights and barbarians in order to build their creature dwellings and mage guild. Therefore the View Mines and View Resources become extraordinarily helpful to them, particularly on higher difficulty levels. The spellcasters, at least in the early stages of a scenario, must concentrate on gathering resources before troops—and these spells can cut down on the time it takes to find them.



Before you cast View Mines and View Resources, make sure you know which resources you need to expand your troops and castle dwellings, then jot down their locations. Head out, in particular, for the mines that you need for your type of castle. The computer aggressively pursues mines and so should you. Also, early in a game if you see there are several mines in an area controlled by a specific opponent, you then know that the opponent's castle is nearby. It's a nice bit of intelligence to have.

Level II Combat Spells

Lightning Bolt

It's spells like this one that equalize the battlefield might of knights/barbarians and sorceresses/warlocks. When you cast this spell onto an enemy troop it inflicts a major blast of damage upon that troop—25 times the spell power of your hero.

You don't until you stumble out and find them. The View Mines and View Resources spells can save you chunks of exploration time.

These two spells can also give you some nice surprises. In *Jolly Roger*, for example, it is only by casting View Resources that you would discover the existence of small islands around the perimeter of the map—islands that dispense genies and artifacts among other essential things.

The mines are particularly valuable for the spellcasters because they need

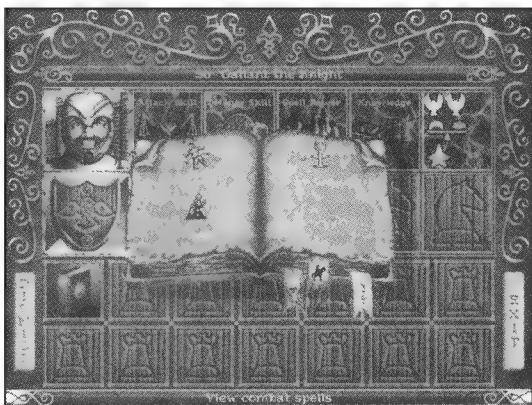


Figure 11-6
Sir Gallant has learned the *Turn Undead* spell.

artifact? Then use Blind or Paralyze to keep one of its troops on the field, then blast it off the field with a well-timed lightning bolt.

Are you terrified of an attacking barbarian's 18 cyclops? Don't panic. Lay low and fire lightning bolts until the cyclop's numbers are more to your liking. And if paladins are hammering at your gates, you can cheer with lightning bolts in hand because paladins have only 50 hit points. Even if you're spell power is only 2, you can kill a paladin with each bolt.

Best of all, as a level 2 spell, Lightning Bolt can come into play early and often. It just might make it worthwhile to be a spellcaster.

Cure

The Cure spell works like Dispel Magic in that it removes spells from troops, but whereas Dispel Magic removes all spells (good and bad) from all troops (yours and theirs), Cure is more selective. It removes only negative spells only from your troops. Cure is obviously a better spell than Dispel Magic (that's why it's a level 2 spell), and you should use it whenever your opponent has stymied your forces.

Haste

When a troop is "hasted," it not only becomes fast, it becomes faster than the fastest natural speed that you find with any creature in the game. As a result, the hasty troop always attacks first in battle and, if it is a non-flying creature, it can move more than three spaces.

Therefore, if you're a spellcaster with a bloated spell power of 5 or 10, you see just how much damage you can do (125 or 250 points) with a couple of lightning bolts.

Are you concerned about your opponent's superior flying troops (say genies, griffins, phoenixes) or range attack troops (druids, trolls)? Then hit them with a lightning bolt—if you have a decent spell power count—and watch how quickly their numbers dwindle.

Are you worried that the computer is about to retreat to protect its hero's



Haste has many wonderful uses. Cast it on a powerful range attack troop like a troll so that it can attack early. Or place this spell on a hydra so this sloth-like creature that usually must wait many rounds to engage in battle can become the immediate center of attention. You can move it quickly into the attack, like the wolf, but it can strike several opponent troops at once with its multiple heads. The slower and bigger and more nasty the creature, the better Haste works its magic upon it.

Haste can wreak havoc on the attack order of the troops. Your opponent might be counting on the fact that their fast phoenix will attack your medium-fast cyclops first, but with Haste you can be first and you can reach them in one move.

In multiplayer games, Slow, Haste, Blind and Paralyze become the prime spells for experienced players because they come as a surprise. Opponents are anticipating and counting on certain conditions, and these throw a monkey wrench into their thinking. Battle veterans usually know with one look how a battle will end up, but these spells jar the order of attack.

Turn Undead

The name of this spell always sounds like a major grammatical *faux pas*, but don't worry linguists, you won't have much opportunity to use it. Turn Undead works only against ghosts, and no other creatures. When you zap a troop of ghosts with it, the entire troop is instantly obliterated, no matter how many ghosts are in the troop. Ghosts can be such fearsome fighters with their peculiar reproduction capacity—when they kill you, they become more—that you should always carry a few Turn Undeads in your spell book.

Blind

The Blind spell destroys an enemy troop's ability to attack. The enemy can still retaliate against your attack if blinded, but they can't attack you. Like the Paralyze and Berserk spells, the Blind spell is immediately canceled if the blinded troop takes on any damage. Blind is not only one of the most useful spells in combat, it's plentiful. You can often find them in shrines and, as a level-two spell, they are relatively inexpensive to acquire.

Blind works well when you lay siege to a castle, especially if the enemy garrison has only one or two troops. If you kill all but one of the troops, you can blind that lone survivor, which eliminates the castle's ballista. (The ballista fires at the beginning of each battle round, but if the last castle troop is blinded and can't attack, the ballista does not fire.) You can then waltz unmolested into the castle with your troops and prepare for the final kill.

Anti-Magic

Cast this spell on one of your troops and no spell can harm you. It can't be slowed, blinded, paralyzed, struck by lightning... it can't be affected by any magic. For as long as the spell lasts, the troop becomes invulnerable, like the dragon, to all enchantment.

Particularly good uses for Anti-Magic are genies and paladins, who have lower hit points (50 each) than their top-rank cousins such as dragons, phoenix, and cyclops. Powerful opponents can easily wipe out genies and paladins with well-placed Lightning Bolts and Storms, so swath them often in this magical cloak of invincibility.

Level II Adventure Spells

Summon Boat

Summon Boat teleports your nearest unoccupied ship to the shoreline nearest your hero who cast the spell. The important thing to remember is that it will only teleport one of your ships, never one of your opponent's ships.

This spell reigns supreme on island maps because it saves you time. You can travel on the boat to one end of an island, get out to search and scavenge it, then summon the boat back to you on the other end. Without out you'd have to waste many turns trudging back to your boat to get off the island.

Use Summon Boat to save money as well. Buy one boat but shuttle it back and forth between two or more heroes. As soon as one hero gets finished with it, the next one can summon it, and so on.

View Artifacts

Get out your game pad and write down these locations. There's nothing like an artifact or two to jump start a hero into superhero status. With View Artifacts, you see all at once the locations of all standard artifacts (sorry, you still have to hunt and dig for the Ultimate Artifact). Find the ones that best match your hero—a Witches Broach of Magic for a warlock or sorceress, for example—and get to it.

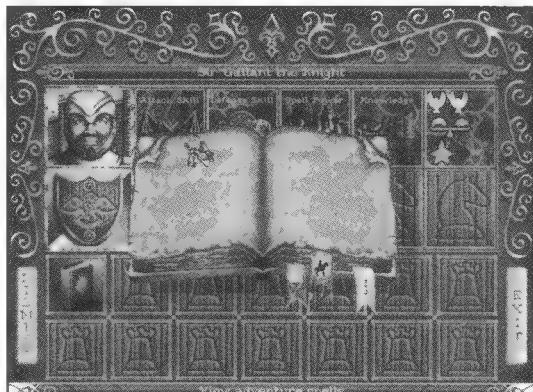


Figure 11-7

Sir Gallant has also learned the View Artifacts spell.



Level III Combat Spells

Teleport

Cast Teleport on one of your troops and you can move it instantly to any unoccupied space on the battlefield or inside of a castle. Like Haste, this spell can make slow units who rarely make it into battle one of the lightning brigade. And if you don't have any range attack troops when you attack a castle, this spell can transform any one of your troops into a range-attack troop. "Fly" cavalry or a hydra over the walls and see how fun magic can be. Teleport can be a defensive tactic as well. If several enemy troops are attacking one of yours at close quarters, teleport them into a relatively safer space. The bottom line is that Teleport is a good "surprise" spell that can catch opponents off guard—and there's nothing they can do about it once it happens.

Paralyze

Paralyze works like a high-grade Blind spell. When you cast it against an opponent they can not only not attack you, they can't retaliate against your attacks either. That's paralysis, and it's what makes this one of the best spells in the game.

Definitely use Paralyze against the computer when it wants to retreat with a hero that's holding an artifact. Place it on one of its a relatively weak troops so that it cannot leave the battlefield, wipe out all its other troops, then attack the affected troop with whatever you've got that can kill it in a single attack.

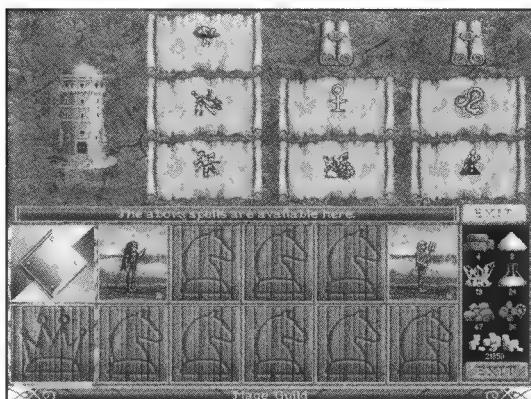


Figure 11-8

The mage guild is built to level three.

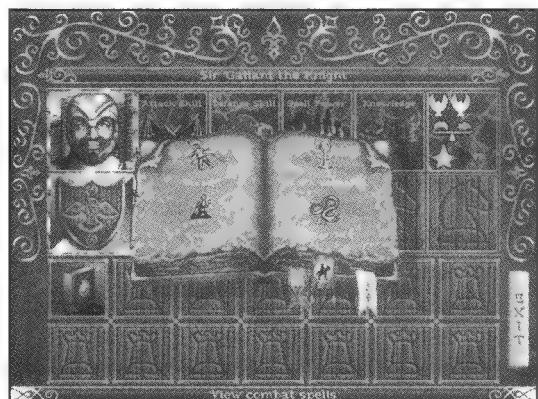


Figure 11-9

Sir Gallant, after visiting his level-three mage guild.

One New World tester calls Paralyze “the ultimate cheesy spell” when you have the Ultimate Book of Knowledge which gives you +12 spell knowledge. When you have 14 or 15 paralysis spells you can defeat almost any army you attack or that attacks you. Even if your opponent has 100 hydras in a castle, for example, you can surround the multi-headed beast and alternate between attacks and spells of paralysis—the result is that it will never be able to touch you.

Fireball

Fireball is the weak-sister spell to Lightning Bolt and Meteor Shower. When you fling a fireball it inflicts damage equal to just 10 times the spell power of the hero that threw it. On the other hand, it inflicts that damage not only on the enemy troop but on anything that occupies the six spaces immediately surrounding that troop.

Fireball is less useful than the two spells mentioned because its multiplier is only 10 instead of 25, but it’s not worthless. A 6-power Lightning Bolt inflicts 150 points while a 6-power Fireball musters only 60 damage points. Therefore it’s good to use against troops with lesser hit points such as wolves (20), elves (15), and gargoyles (15) so that you can still make multiple kills. Against creatures like cyclops with their 80 hit points, the fireball is a waste.

Storm

This spell has its berserk aspects to it in that when you cast this universal spell every single troop on the battlefield is affected negatively. How negatively depends upon the spell power of the casting hero. Like Lightning Bolt, Storm’s damage is equal to 25 times the hero’s spell power. Unlike Lightning Bolt, whose strike is troop specific, Storm touches everyone. No one escapes, friendly or not—except the spell-invincible dragon or the dwarf if it gets lucky with its 25% chance of spell-invincibility, or any troop fortunate enough to be under the spell of Anti-Magic.

Use Storm in battle if you have many powerful troops with high hit points and your opponent has many wimpy troops with wimpy hit points. You will kill many more of their troops than you will your own, and you can save a lot of time. The computer loves to use Storm when it knows it’s about to die and it wants to make you suffer in victory. You should do likewise.

A word of warning. Keep an eye on your spell power when you cast this spell. If you have a power of 2 or 3, and a significant advantage in troop numbers and toughness, Storm can be an efficient killing strategy. But as your power climbs to 5 or higher, it starts to look more like suicide than bravado.



If your opponent has *The Ultimate Cloak of Protection*, which bestows +12 defense upon a hero and thus makes the hero nearly invincible, *Storm* can help you out. Recruit a warlock or sorceress with a significantly high spell power, load them up with a goodly number of fast troops so they can attack first, then turn them into kamikaze pilots—have them cast *Storm* spells until they kill themselves. In the process, however, you can reduce the troop strength of your unbeatable opponent to a “beatable” number. It definitely is a sacrificial banzai plot, but if you can get rid of a hero with an ultimate artifact, that artifact is gone forever. If you can’t, you’re most likely a goner anyway.

Berserk

Another negative spell to cast upon your unworthy opponents, *Berserk* is particularly fiendish. When an enemy troop is under the *Berserk* spell, it will randomly attack an adjacent troop on its next turn—regardless of that troop’s affiliation. If there is no adjacent enemy troop, it wanders around aimlessly. If it doesn’t kill whatever it attacks, the attacked beast can retaliate against the “berserk” attacker if it hasn’t already used up its retaliation. Once the berserk troop has attacked anything, however, the spell vanishes.

Imagine a berserk enemy phoenix or cyclops (whose fire-power reaches across two spaces), surrounded by its own troops, and you can see what a wonderfully twisted enchantment this spell really is. As one New World tester puts it: “It can get ugly.”

If you have more than one *Berserk*, you can really break down a strong castle defense with this spell. Sometimes while you’re waiting for the catapult to rip down the ramparts your troops can be picked off easily by the range attack troops in the garrison forces. To correct this state of affairs, zap a *Berserk* upon the biggest and nastiest unit in the castle—as long as it’s not a dragon which magic cannot affect—and watch what happens. In a castle, where troops are confined by walls, it’s impossible for nearby troops to escape the crazed attacks of a berserk creature.



Playing in the campaigns? Having a tough time killing the 50 to 100 power troops (cyclops, minotaurs, unicorns, etc.) that have been building up in the different castles? Get a hold of Berserk and you can reduce the numbers of any big troop count very quickly as you watch the enemy creatures beat themselves up. Just make sure that you cast Berserk onto an enemy troop just before it attacks, otherwise the enemy hero can cast a counterspell.

Level III Adventure Spells

View Towns

Cast this spell and you can see the entire map dotted with towns and castles, marked by type (barbarian, warlock, etc.) and by ownership. If you know which opponent owns which castles and towns, and what kinds of troops they have, you can plan your strategy accordingly. For example, you would know what kinds of resources they need to acquire their most powerful troops, so you could work on controlling those types of mines. Or you could see that an opponent has spellcasting heroes, as you do—thus you’re competing for the same resources—so you might want to acquire a knight or barbarian castle and expand in a non-competitive direction.

Identify Hero

Usually you can only know a descriptive range of an enemy hero’s army strength (Few, Lots, etc.) but with this spell you can discover the exact number and type of troops as well as another pertinent stat: Do they have artifacts? Or the Ultimate Artifact? Imagine that you’re out adventuring and you run across the spot where the Ultimate Artifact has been unearthed. You know that one of the enemy’s heroes is now super powerful but not which one so you cast Identify Hero so that you won’t stumble into a battle that you’re not yet ready for.

View Heroes

Whereas Identify Hero tells you the “what” of your opponent’s heroes, this spell tells you the “where.” Cast this spell and you can see the exact locations on the map (indicated by colored flags) of all friendly and belligerent heroes. Thus you know how many heroes your opponent has and where they are but you’ll have to cast Identify Hero in order to find out the power of their army. Use this spell



when you're playing multiplayer games where you can't see your opponents' moves. Keep a "do-nothing" hero inside of a castle with a level 3 mage guild so that you can cast View Heroes and Identify Hero every turn—keeping a close eye on your opponent's expansion and movements.

Level IV Combat Spells

Meteor Shower

Meteor Shower operates just like Fireball but more powerfully. Cast Meteor Shower against an enemy troop and you inflict damage equal to 25 times the hero's spell power against that troop—and against any forces unlucky enough to be standing in the six spaces that immediately surround that troop. See the description of Fireball for the tactical uses of this spell. The uses are the same but with its larger multiplier Meteor Shower is much more valuable to you. With a decent spell power you can eliminate a good chunk of an enemy's forces with one blast.

Armageddon

Armageddon works in exactly the same way as Storm, only worse. When Storm is cast, the damage that is inflicted on all troops on the battlefield is 25 times the caster's spell power. Double that to 50 times the hero's spell power and you truly have Armageddon. Everyone gets zapped, no one is spared (except dragons, dwarves 25% of the time, and troops under the Anti-Magic spell). See the description of Storm for the tactical applications of Armageddon.

Resurrect

You've heard of the laying on of hands to cure people of what's ailing them. This is laying on of spells to make your troops feel much better in their hit points. When you cast this spell on one of your troops it essentially receives a number of hit points equal to 50 times the spell power of your hero. That means, for example, if you cast Resurrect on your orcs which have 10 hit points, and your hero has a spell power of 5, the orcs would receive 250 (5×50) hit points—or 25

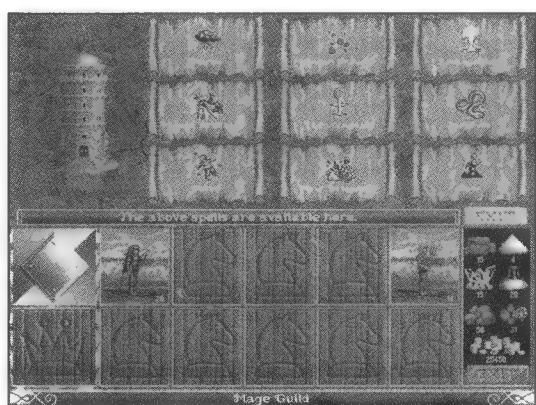


Figure 11-10

Sir Gallant now has a level-four mage guild.



new orcs (250/10). It's what you call bringing troops back to life, and it's particularly useful when used with your more-powerful and expensive troops. You can only resurrect up to the number of creatures that have died in the current battle; you can not end the battle with more creatures than you started with.

The computer tends to focus its attacks on only one of your troops at a time (archers or range attack troops in the earliest stages of battle, for example). So if you continue to resurrect that troop after the computer's attacks, you ostensibly take the computer out of the battle.

Level IV Adventure Spells

View All

View All lets you see the entire map world, complete with all the locations of enemy heroes and castles, as well as mines and resources. The usefulness of such clairvoyance is obvious. Cast it before you begin a turn and it gives you all the information you need to maximize the effectiveness of your movements—as well as to keep yourself out of trouble.

Town Gate

Here's the scene. One of your heroes has been traveling and marauding for weeks far from your castle. It has done well in battle, grabbed many resources for you, but now it's running low on troops—and suddenly it's surrounded by hostile forces. What do you do? If you have the Town Gate spell, you cast it—and the embattled hero is transported safely and instantly to the nearest town or castle that you control.

Town Gate is also useful when you need to resupply one of your heroes with fresh troops. Often you want to return to a castle as soon as a new week starts to replenish your troops, and this spell speeds up that process. In this regard, Town Gate can be used well with the Dimension Door spell. Using Dimension Door you can move out from your castle in great bounds but, if you need to return instantly to the castle—say an enemy hero has suddenly appeared within striking distance—you can employ Town Gate.

Dimension Door

Dimension Door is a traveling spell. It centers your hero on the computer screen and then you are able to teleport yourself to any open map space that appears on the screen. It has limitations, however. You can't teleport from land to a ship on the sea, and you can't teleport from a ship to land.



Originally this spell consumed no movement points as you used it, so a turn could last forever. If you had a large spell knowledge, you could cast it over and over again—and be able to return to your castle at will to replenish it. To curb that larceny, the spell now has a movement limit. You can go only so far with it—but it's still significantly farther than one standard movement—and that comes in very handy when you're fleeing someone more powerful than you, or if you want to magically skirt some obstacle (like water, mountains, or a powerful wandering monster) that block your way.



The computer will cast dimension door. Not often, but it will use it. So be watchful. Sometime late in the game you'll be counting that it won't be able to reach your castle in a single turn and, surprise, a powerful enemy hero appears on your doorstep like a mirage.



Imagine that you are a warlock or sorceress with the Ultimate Wand of Magic (+12 spell power) or the Ultimate Book of Knowledge (+12 spell knowledge) and you can see how spellcasters can easily hold their own against even the mightiest knights and barbarians. Of course, spells are for all heroes, regardless of their natural tendencies. A knight or barbarian hero who can find a way to achieve a 3 or 4 spell power—or better yet, grab the Wand of Magic or Book of Knowledge—is truly a formidable force. As in life, the key in *Heroes of Might and Magic* is balance. You should try to increase the attack and defense skills of your spellcasting heroes as much as you can, and you should likewise increase the spellcasting talents of your fighter heroes.

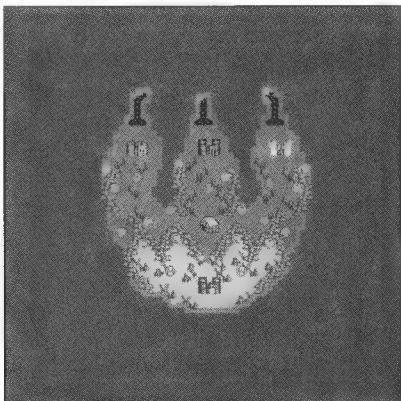
Chapter Twelve



Standard Scenarios

Okay, okay, you might be thinking, enough of the preliminaries, what about the solutions to the standard scenarios in *Heroes of Might and Magic*? You already know how tough the computer is; now you just want answers so you can finally whip the blasted machine. Well, fortunately or unfortunately—depending on your point of view—no easy and absolute answers exist for this game. *Heroes* gives you far too many random variables each time you play and too much control of a game's direction for us to give you an A through Z walk-through for each map. This is unfortunate if you seek a “quick fix” to guarantee you swift victory, saving you mass quantities of time and potential frustration. But it's fortunate if you like games you can play every week until the next millennium—and never grow bored.

Somewhere between no-easy-answers and no-help-at-all (and closer to the latter, I hope) lies the information in this chapter. There are many ways—maybe infinite ways—to defeat the computer in each of the 18 standard maps. Instead of reciting you blow-by-blow accounts of victorious scenarios, which never can be duplicated anyway, this chapter gives you proven strategies and tactics for each map. Use them, and you will learn to consistently beat the computer. Just remember: Lady Luck plays a major role in every map. You can follow the greatest strategy to the letter, but if the computer hero happens to be closer to more gold than you are—or his castle stands beside the mine he needs to acquire his most powerful troop—or he stumbles upon 50 genies in the desert—or a million other potential windfalls—you might be a goner. On the other hand, you can make a dozen heinous mistakes or some truly awful decisions, and still get a few lucky breaks that can turn the tides of victory your way.



Claw

The features that makes Claw one of the easiest scenarios in the game are its size (small), its resources (plentiful), and your starting situation (fat and happy). You always start in the castle at the bottom of the map, and the computer always starts up north. Between you and your electronic foe lies a pass guarded by griffins that keep you in and your opponents out. This gives you plenty of time to explore your southern surroundings, gather up resources and artifacts, and build strong heroes for the coming battles.

The basic strategies to victory in Claw:

1. Strengthen yourself so you can defeat the griffins.
2. Take the town just on the other side of the griffins.
3. Build that town into a castle.
4. Sweep north from this power base to knock out each opponent one by one.

Now, here are some tricks to make that plan a little easier:

- ⦿ Select the King Of The Hill feature before you start the game and always play it against three opponents. If you don't select King Of The Hill, your foes attack each other, one takes over at least one of the other two castles, and you face an opponent that is far too powerful for you to handle when you finally get there. It is better to let them divide the castles, resources, artifacts, and other goodies of the north between them, so none of them grows overly nasty and aggressive. If you play with less than three opponents, the same consolidation of power occurs. Instead of dividing the riches of the land by three, the spoils are concentrated in the hands of only one or two warlords—and that spells trouble.
- ⦿ The type of castle you start with in the south changes each time you play. If you don't like the type of castle the computer "deals" you, restart the game until you get the one you want. You always find a knight town nearby, so you may be wise to start with the knight castle. That way, you never need to cross-breed troops in your armies. Both castles can supply you with the same kinds of troops. On the other hand, you have so much gold and resources on-hand, you can win as well with either spellcaster. Castle type is less important on this map than on others.



- U The griffins guarding the pass never join your ranks if you attack them, so don't make the mistake of attacking them with a wimpy army in the hope they will. You must always fight them, so bring plenty of firepower.
- U You always find the Endless Sack Of Gold artifact, which gives you 1,000 gold pieces per day near your castle. Since it is possible for a computer player to control two castles up North, and thus, receive 2,000 gold pieces per day, this artifact instantly evens things out. Target this artifact before you go after any mines, because gold is always more important than any other resource. If you hold the barbarian or warlock castle with their expensive troops, you need all the cash you can get. (You can also fatten your treasury with the gold from the many treasure chests scattered around you.)
- U Finding the resources you need to expand is easy. For one, you don't need many dwellings, because you start with an already crowded castle. Second, you find whatever mines you need to complete your troop factories located nearby. Finally, the weakest wandering armies guard the mines. These are randomly chosen by the computer, but the toughest troops you can face are gargoyles and pikemen. It might take you a week or more to become strong enough to defeat them. After you pick up the gold artifact, target the mines. Figure out what resources you need to fill out your ranks, find the mines, and go for them.
- U This scenario is so small you can win with only your fourth- or fifth-level troops. You don't need to take the time to acquire your most powerful troop, unless you really want it. However, the longer you wait to break through the pass and move into the north, the stronger your opponents grow. It's best to build strength quickly with your lesser troops and forge ahead. The game can be over before you even muster your Big Guys.
- U Sight-seeing? You'll find gazebos, some shrines, and a graveyard on your travels. Visit the gazebos and shrines but avoid the graveyard. It's rarely worth your time—or troops—to fight the ghosts.
- U Three obelisks stand nearby. If you can spare a hero, set him up as an ultimate artifact scout and visit these three locations. They alone can give you enough information to lead you to the sacred object, which is always worth it.

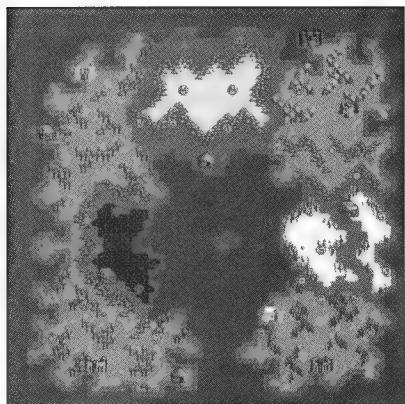


- U As long as you're snagging artifacts, go after the artifact hidden along the way to the wood mine (which every hero type needs). One of three things can happen when you find this artifact: 1) You get the artifact without a hitch; 2) You pay some money before you get the artifact; or 3) You fight for the artifact. The odds, however, greatly favor the first two possibilities. There's a 60 percent chance you just get it, a 20 percent chance you must pay up, and a 20 percent chance of battle. Even if forced to fight, the worst troop you face is the rogues, which are eminently beatable.
- U After you acquire enough resources and troops to wipe out the griffins, the key to triumph with this map is securing the center town and expanding it into a castle as quickly as you can. From the center town, you can guard the pass that leads back to your initial castle and can use it as a staging point to advance north to conquer the weakest opponent castle. You can also wait for enemy heroes to come to you and pick them off one by one, which slowly drains the enemy's strength and treasury.
- U Gold gives you your advantage on this map. You can quickly garner an income of 4,000 gold pieces per day if you grab the gold artifact; take the center town and build it into a castle; then find and take control of the gold mine on the other side of the pass. The computer just can't keep up with that kind of cash production (each opponent usually holds only one castle), and you can eventually wear it down by building many more troops than it can.



At all costs, keep the warlock castle in the north from getting strong enough to buy dragons, or you have no chance to win. To prevent this from happening, consider attacking the warlock castle first after you've defeated the griffins and taken the center town. The warlock needs more resources and gold to increase its dwellings and troops—and that takes time. So if you can, strike early while the warlock is at its weakest.

- U If one of your opponents actually manages to take another computer castle, you should conquer that opponent as fast as possible. The computer heroes must focus their attention on the center town, but if you station a powerful hero there, you can pick them off as they sweep down on you. Because many of these heroes carry artifacts, they shun a powerful hero. If they don't hold an artifact, they are most likely weak, and you can defeat them anyway. Sometimes, you get lucky and capture an artifact from a hero.



Around The Bay

A name like Around The Bay might make you think that shipyards and shipbuilding play a heightened role in this scenario, and they do. With ships, you can get anywhere on this map. After you play it a while, your computer opponent changes tactics—and doesn't hesitate to jump in a ship and surprise you by sea, rather than by land. As is often the case in *Heroes*, it pays to mimic the computer's behavior.

Comparatively speaking, this is a large map, which means you usually get plenty of time to gather your forces before your foes attack you. Adding to this sense of blissful isolation is the fact that this big map contains only six or seven towns. Because the towns are few and far between, all the warlords tend to grow more slowly and evenly. Your opponents don't conquer two or three towns and turn them all into castles by the third week. On the other hand, with so few towns, the competition for them can be fierce. Your best strategy is to target one near your home castle (preferably one of your own ilk) and turn it into a castle as fast as you can.

You begin this scenario in any of the four castles on the map. The computer randomly selects for you both the location and the type of castle. All the towns on the map are randomly determined, as well, along with the wandering armies and resources. In fact, except for dragons in the north, not much here isn't random.

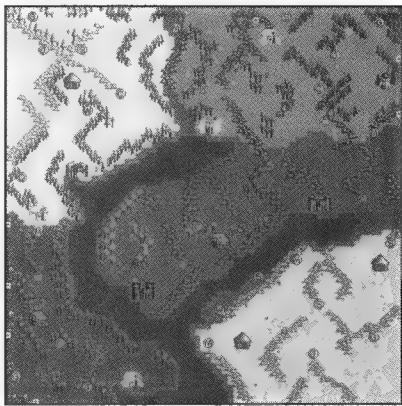
With random castle selection, all the starting castles on the map may be different, or you may find two of the same type on the map. If you want to make things easier on yourself, seek out starting situations that give you an opportunity to acquire two castles of the same type relatively quickly. This means you should look for a nearby town of the same type as your castle and target it. If there are none to be had, don't hesitate to restart the scenario until you find a matching set. When you rule two castles of the same breed, you double your troop production, you can more easily transfer troops back and forth between heroes, and you don't cross-breed troop types in your hero armies—which can damage your morale.





No fancy strategy for winning this scenario presents itself. All of the heroes get plenty of time to build up their forces. Then, they come at each other with vigor, both by land and by sea. If any advantage exists at all, it comes from starting out in one of the southern castles rather than in the northern castles. If you start from the south, you can take out the northern hostiles very quickly. Here's how:

- ⑤ The secret to this map resides with a lighthouse located on a small island in the center of the bay. You can't see it from the shore; just know it's there and sail for it. This lighthouse increases the movement of all your ships, providing a great advantage on this map. To the fastest warlord goes the spoils, such as resources and gold and artifacts—the conduits of power.
- ⑤ There are ways to increase your ship speed even more. Ideally, you should start with a sorceress castle, because the sorceress doubles movement aboard ships. Usually, the sorceress castle makes a bad starting place due to the expense of its dwellings and troops. But on this map, the plentiful resources and time to gather them up somewhat offset these negatives. If you don't own a sorceress castle, don't fret. Just make sure to put some sorceress heroes on deck when you go boating. Finally, keep your eye out for such mobility artifacts as the True Compass and Sailor's Astrolabe, which also boost ship speed. With an artifact, a sorceress, and a visit to the lighthouse, you move across the bay like a cigarette boat. Your opponents won't know what hit them.
- ⑤ After you've raised your flag above the lighthouse, look for the whirlpool in the waters to the north. (Remember to place a hero nearby, however, to secure the lighthouse against interlopers; the lighthouse has no indigenous defenders.) The whirlpool teleports you to the other side of the island by the dragon tower. This approach gets you there much faster than going over land, and if you're fortunate, you can catch your northern nemeses napping. If you conquer one of the northern castles, it's usually enough to give you the balance of power. Then, total victory is just a matter of time—it may take a while due to the size of the map.



Badlands

Why would any one call a scenario Badlands? Probably for the same reason they call the stark, barren landscape in the Dakotas the Badlands. The terrain is so rough and inhospitable, it's difficult to traverse. This scenario features a lot of bad terrain, especially snow and ice, that thwarts troop movement. Unfortunately, you find most of the good stuff—the resources, artifacts and gold—located within the adverse grounds, so it's a reality you must simply contend with.

The key to dominating the Badlands comes from quickly gaining as much strength as possible. Concentrate on controlling your area first, exploring and consuming as much as you can. In this map, you constantly feel the urge to go off wandering before you're ready. Resist the temptation. If you spread yourself too thin, the computer overcomes you like a bad smell. After you develop a strong hero and stock your castle garrisons well, select your weakest opponent and go after the scoundrel. Repeat the process until victory is secured. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Tip *Don't underestimate the power of Identify Hero spell on this map (or any other map, for that matter). It gives you exact numbers (instead of vague descriptions) of enemy troops, as well as their attack, defense, spell power and knowledge ratings. Therefore, you know very specifically which heroes are the best to target first and which can wait for your offensive. For example, if a hero ranks +13 or +14 in any of the skill ratings, you know he or she carries an ultimate artifact. You even know which ultimate relic the hero holds. Therefore, you can attack immediately to prevent that hero from becoming invulnerable. Also, you can learn whether a hero has left its castles relatively unguarded and open for your onslaught. The computer knows your strength; this spell can be your equalizer.*

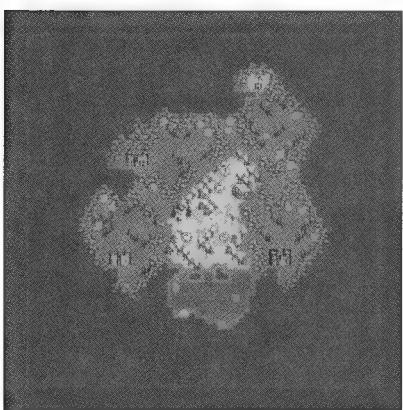
The first trick on this map is to start with a barbarian castle—if you're lucky enough to get it straight off or patient enough to keep restarting the map until you do. Barbarians suffer no movement penalty in snow, desert, or swamp. If you can't muster the barbarian castle, at least recruit some barbarian heroes.



The second trick is to look for any speed-enhancing artifacts, such as the Nomad Boots, Travelers Boots, and True Compass. This helps you achieve your objective with this map—which is, to move swiftly around the bad lands, grabbing all the goodies before your opponents do. The computer proves a tenacious grabber, so you need to get a jump on it any way you can.

If your starting configuration doesn't include barbarians, look to ships as your savior. Ships and sorceresses can provide many uses on this map. You can eliminate a great deal of travel time by scuttling across the middle of the map, rather than trudging around the outsides. Plus, when you're on the water, you can skip entirely some of the snowy terrain. Combining your ships with sorceress heroes gives you an additional speed boost.

The southern castle provides an advantageous place to start, as well. Although the towns in the south are spread out, with a barbarian—or actually any hero with fast troops—you can sweep the countryside down south with relative freedom. Gain control these towns as quickly as you can. Otherwise, before long, you find the computer—which excels at fast movement—at your throat.



Close Quarters

Close Quarters was one of the first maps created for *Heroes*, and as one New World tester puts it, "It is still one of the best small maps." Although the heroes are clustered together in, well, close quarters, each of the starting castles provides a relatively safe haven for growth. You can start in any of the four corners of the map. However, in every one of them, your wandering troops protect you from attackers—while enemy wandering troops block you from expansion.

Randomness strikes this map as it does most of the standard scenarios. Your location is determined at random. The type of castle you rule is random. The towns and artifacts and most resources—except for gold—are random. So, you gain no huge advantage by starting in one castle locations over another. The northernmost castle must fight to get the two mines it needs to expand. The other three castles feature one mine within walking distance, and only one for which they must truly battle to control, but these offer their only real advantages. For a short time, you can safely scour any of the havens for all your needs.

However, soon (better than later), you each must battle the wandering armies to get one of the mines you need. Fortunately, they are relatively weak.

All the action happens in the center of this map. Most of the mines the heroes need in order to buy more powerful troops are located in the middle of the map, so the area can get congested.

Moreover, the only two neutral towns are both located in the center, so all heroes focus on them. With so few towns, your main goal consists of taking control of one or both of them. It's easier, though more expensive, to build a castle from one of these towns than to conquer a castle on this map. On the other hand, because of their central location, they are hard to hold. Make sure you acquire enough strength to hold any castle you build here, or you just end up handing it over nearly free of charge to your opponents—a disastrous mistake. One good strategy is to wait for an opponent to build a castle here, then attack it with a powerful hero before it can grow strong enough to repel you. Any castle is at its weakest just after it has been purchased.

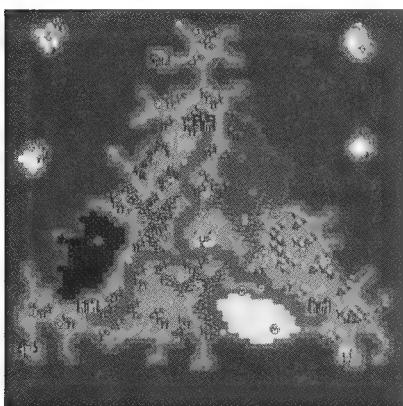
The south can provide a productive area for a sorceress. You find both mercury mines in the lower swamp, and the sorceress needs mercury to build the phoenix. The south also features two relatively unguarded artifacts. If you can battle past the defenders or sail past them, you can get these artifacts very quickly and leave without too much pain and suffering. For these reasons, the best location might be in the south if you have the sorceress castle, but the advantage is not absolute. Any one with a fast ship can target these artifacts.

Because of her enhanced ship movement capabilities, the sorceress may hold another slight advantage on this map. Ships are a sneaky secret on this map. Though they may not appear to be of great use, you can use them to sneak up on strategic locations—those two gold mines, for instance—while a hero occupies himself elsewhere.

The key to victory on this map lies in finding the perfect balance between defensive strength and offensive clout. If you move out too quickly before you build strong defenses, the computer villains comes after you—and they don't have to go far. On the other hand, if you wait too long, you leave the few towns and key locations to your opponents, which haunts you over time. For example, there can be four players, but there are always only two gold mines—one on each side of the map. The gold mines work as well as castles for your treasury. Taking and holding them gives you a major advantage. But to take them and hold them, you must leave your safe haven in good hands. The first warlord to find the elusive offensive/defensive balance becomes the victor—and luck has as much to do with obtaining this balance as skill.



Close Quarters is one of the fastest scenarios to play, because everyone is so closely connected and there are so few towns for expansion. Thus, it's a good map for multiplayer games, because you don't have to spend weeks waiting to fight each other. As soon as you start moving away from your safe haven, you start bumping into people.



Crossroads

This is one tough map. I'd like to be able to tell you to follow such and such specific steps, and everything will be all right, but it just doesn't work that way. You start in the center of the map, trapped inside a small arena by groups of genies guarding the passes in all cardinal directions. While, barely surviving, you struggle to control the mines and grab the artifacts in your prison, your computer opponents come at you with full arsenals. This

does not pose a fair fight. The computer starts out with far more than you and gets stronger every day. Many players become enormously frustrated with Crossroads and consider it unbeatable. But there is a way, if you're patient and don't expect to win every time.

Success on this map depends upon the type of castle you start with. Your chances of winning improve with a knight or barbarian, rather than a sorceress or warlock castle, because the knight and barbarian troops cost less in terms of both gold and resources. You must build up your troop strength as fast as possible. With a knight or barbarian, you start within your "protected" sphere with the wood and ore mines you need to purchase most of your dwellings. Therefore, you can purchase cavalry or trolls without much difficulty. Forget the paladins and cyclops for the time being; you haven't the time.

Still, no matter what strategy you take, victory largely rests on a hope and a prayer with this map. You hope for one computer player to quickly bust in on you. That way, you don't have to try to defeat the genies hemming you in; your opponents do the job for you. If you're lucky, you become powerful enough by then to defeat your attacker/liberator. Afterward, you can follow the defeated hero back to its castle and capture it. That's the plan, anyway.

What you most pray for is that the random starting configuration for the computer opponents is such that it takes at least a week for their heroes to break through to you. If the genies fall on the strong side, it takes the computer a little longer. If the computer starts with a few less troops and dwellings, it delays your foe's attacks against you. This is all randomly determined. Sometimes, you see your enemies advancing in two weeks; other times, they come on the fourth day. You pray for the two weeks, because it offers your only real chance.

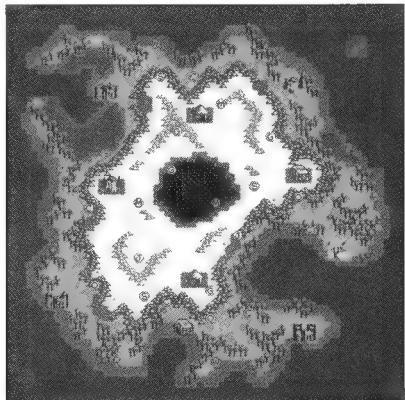
The computer as liberator, of course, is a two-edged sword. You want the computer troops to first battle the guardian genies. However, if all the warlord heroes rain down upon you at once, you are unable to leave to get the other resources you need—and you die. You're supposed to be expanding, but instead you're busy defending. If you leave your castle relatively unguarded, your foes hound you.

In other words, it's a matter of timing and luck. You must keep playing the game in order to defeat it. If you get frustrated, you won't want to play, so don't get frustrated. Try to keep your cool and pay attention to the strength of your opponents. If it becomes clear during the first week that your enemies are vastly superior, don't wait for them to kill you. Restart the game and cross your fingers for a better starting configuration. Before long, you get the game you want.

If you can break out, move quickly to one of the corners—either left, right, or north—and vanquish the warlord. You may find the north castle preferable, because it gives you access to the gold mines. In general, however, go in the direction of the opponent who attacks you first. This is the one who has extended the farthest, and its defensive troops may be weaker than those who have been sitting at home waiting for you. If you can take out one opponent, you can usually win—and you certainly must try to take out an opponent. If you hunker down in your castle on the notion of making a stand, the three computer foes come down and wipe you out every time.

While cornered by your opponent, you can always envision the four gold mines located in the outer areas of the map. The only way to spot these is to use the View Mines spell. This is a good charm to use on this map, anyway, because you have no time to waste searching for the mines you need. The computer does visit the four gold mines but doesn't make a huge point of it. Most of the obelisks on this map are located on the outer edges, as well. Unfortunately, your computer foes control many of these islands.

If you think that collecting artifacts might provide a quick solution to your power problems, forget it. Strong defenders, such as minotaurs and hydras, guard all of them. Wait to attack these powerhouses until after you first defeat weaker wandering armies.



Desert Isle

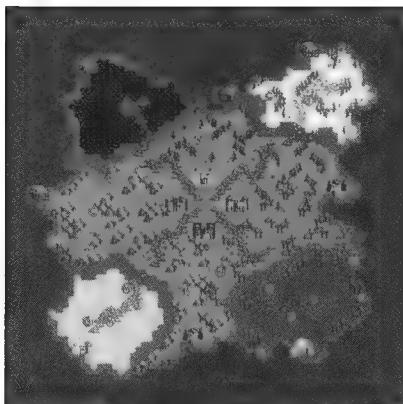
The barbarian reigns supreme on this map, for obvious reasons. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and to cross the desert quickly, you need a barbarian who suffers no movement penalty on bad terrain. The desert is loaded with treasures in the form of artifacts and towns, and a relatively swift barbarian can rush in and sweep the area clean before its counterparts can shake the sand out of their shoes. Besides, you must travel from

side to side on this map. If you don't want to cross the desert, you have to travel all the way around the outside of the map—which eats up too much time. The sorceress can overcome this problem somewhat with her increased movement on ships, but if you sail, you can't take advantage of the treasures in the desert. (If you're a sorceress, however, remember to find the lighthouse on the northeast island—you need all the help you can get.)

The key to winning this map is fast expansion. The computer sets the type of castle for each of the four starting castles, but you can end up in any of them. Two towns—a knight and a warlock—are also pre-determined and permanent. The towns in the middle of the map, however, are random. Wherever you start, you begin with no towns near you. So if you want to expand—and you must expand to win—you must move across the water. This may give an early edge to a sorceress hero, but when the sorceress lands, you will wish it were a barbarian. The barbarians can conquer and multiply much more quickly. And victory goes to the warlord who gets the quick start.



It pays to ignore the dragon towers on this or any other map. By the time you acquire the incredible power it takes to easily take it, you probably don't need the 1,000 gold pieces it gives you each day. Besides, you don't want to waste the time. On this map, getting to the dragon tower means passing by too many tough monsters in the middle of the desert. Aside from bragging rights, it's just not worth the hassle.



Dragon Pass

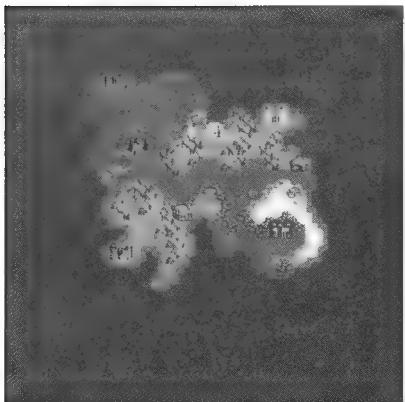
As the designers at New World were creating scenarios for *Heroes*, several of them came upon the same idea: Why not start all four warlords in the center of the map, where they can see each other from the very first turn—but can't get to each other directly? Many maps of this sort reached the drawing board, but only Dragon Pass actually made it into the game. As the name suggests, it features many powerful dragons in the center of the action that stop direct encroachment by any hero. However, a less-intelligent computer hero sometimes launches a foolhardy attack against the dragon and comes to a quick death.

Despite the visual charge of seeing your enemies so up-close and personal, actually, this is not a difficult map to win. The reason lies in the computer's reluctance to fight powerful opponents, unless it has a vastly superior chance for victory. Therefore, instead of attacking the dragons in the center or the genies to the south to get into your "pie slice" of influence, they journey all the way around to reach you. This takes time, giving you plenty of opportunity to prepare for their eventual arrival.

A most effective strategy, as always, is to first secure your area, then to build up two heroes of considerable strength. Walk away from the center of any castle, and you find a town you should turn into a castle as soon as possible. Gather up all resources. Then select which opponent on either side of you that you want to vanquish. Station one of your heroes as a backup to stay at home and protect your backside. Send an attack hero to travel in the opposite direction to charge and conquer the adjacent opponent. After you beat this first warlord, repeat the process: build up the new area so you can replenish your attacking troops, then strike at the next opponent around the "wheel." Once you block off your backside, you can just circle around the map with one strong hero to conquer everyone. Plus, you also get to pick up all the spoils, which only makes you stronger as you go. (If you get really strong and have lots of money and time, you can send your backup hero the other way and pin your opponents between him and your attack hero.)



Each of the four quarters contain rough terrain, so shipbuilding and exploratory voyages can prove good tactics to follow. The problem with naval travel, however, is that you can't take mines from your opponents, nor can you pick up artifacts or visit power places. So, unless speed is of the essence, travel by land. On the other hand, you eventually must venture to the outside edges of this map. A ship can provide a good vehicle for getting you there—especially if you're stuck with slow units that move ploddingly across land, blocked by mountains and other natural obstacles.



Four Nations

Four Nations is one of the favorite maps of the New World testers. It's very small, so the action is fast and furious. The start-up configuration of the castles is pre-set with four castles and four towns. Each town always matches the castle type—which makes for a quick, efficient build-up of troops for every warlord. Most of the wandering armies you must confront are pre-set, as well, with the number of troops changing but never the types, so you always

know what you're up against. Both the resources and the artifacts are random.

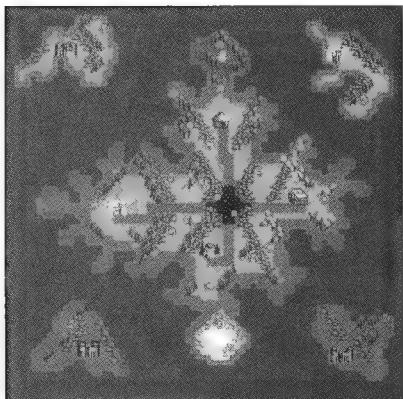
Even though the castles of all four warlords cluster together, you begin with a splendid sense of isolation. As your first objective, take one of the towns closest to you, preferably the one that matches your castle. This enables you to increase your troop production and more readily transfer troops between heroes. Then, grab a gold mine as soon as possible. They are guarded by those powerhouse defenders, the unicorns, but the 1,000 gold pieces per day makes the fight worthwhile. If you are a knight or barbarian, you can increase your troop strength faster than a warlord or sorceress, thus you can fight the unicorns sooner.

The computer heroes love the statue in the center of the map. A crowd of their steeds always mills about there, preparing to move to the four different corners to attack one another. This is one place you want to avoid without plenty of troops in your army.

Let me offer some words of warning about King Of The Hill on this map. If you're set on playing in this mode, reconsider. You'll find the going particularly difficult. Every time you move out of your castle to expand your horizons, a horde of enemy heroes rides in on you—and you can't escape. I've witnessed more than seven foes at once targeting the same human player in King Of The Hill. You can kill them all, but with so many attacking so frequently, you can't leave your roost. Moreover, the infidels grow stronger and stronger as the game proceeds. If you insist on playing King Of The Hill here, build up your garrison forces beyond good sense. Your opponents wander about taking each other's mines, until they feel more than strong enough to knock you off. By that time, you can build up a significant force to defend yourself.



As with most maps, build slowly. When you have a few castles with decent-sized garrisons, then expand out. If you move too quickly, even if you take the places you visit, you are unable to hold them—and the enemy returns at full speed, takes them back, and builds up his garrisons. Once you lose a castle to the computer, good luck getting it back. It takes a lot of time, and you may lose more than you gain in the effort.



Four Corners

Like boxers in the ring, each of the four warlords starts in a castle on a small island in one of the four corners of the map. Eventually, you must find each other and slug it out. The type of castle in each corner is randomly selected, and you find yourself in a different corner each time you play. This map makes for a good multiplayer game, because the island from which everyone starts isn't necessarily the direction from which they attack the main

island. You never know whether they're coming after you or not, until they're suddenly there.



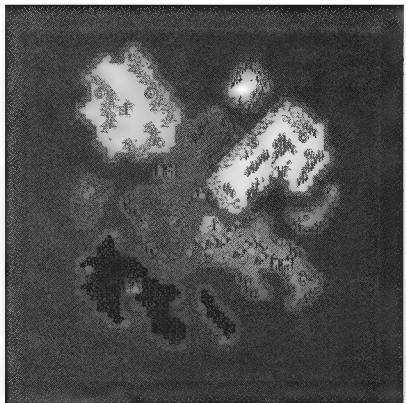
One look at this map with all its water and island solitude, and you know ships play a major role. In case it's not obvious, each island features a mill for wood, a not-so-subtle hint that you need to build boats if you want to expand and conquer. Because of the water, it's best to begin with a sorceress castle to take advantage of her increased mobility on ships. At the very least, use sorceress heroes as the captains of your vessels.

Growth and expansion can come easily on your island, because the warlords begin far enough away from each other that you don't end up fighting each other immediately. A few enemy heroes might invade early on, but their forces are usually weak and you can readily handle them. You start with some of the resources you need nearby, but you have to go out and supplement them when you want to buy more powerful troops. Fortunately, these resources are spread out, as well, giving you room to maneuver without bumping into too many foes.

This map offers two conquering strategies. One way is to attack and conquer your opponents' island castles as fast as you can. A good way to achieve this is to combine a few powerful barbarian troops under the command of a sorceress hero. Her job is to get you to the islands as quickly as possible, then the uncouth barbarians do the grunt battle work. If you can conquer one of the two opponents next to you, you can control one whole side of the map. Then, from that direction, you can invade the middle island and work your way across it toward the last two islands on the other side.

The second road to victory is to aggressively attack the main island in order to sweep up all of the extra resources that accumulate there, particularly ore. The home islands are entirely bereft of ore mines, which all heroes need. So if you don't get lucky and get the ore you need from the random resources on your island, you must compete for them on the main island. All the artifacts and obelisks reside on the center island, as well, most of them guarded by extremely nasty wandering armies. Thus, this road is definitely not for the faint of heart. If you decide to take it, bring powerful warriors—knights or barbarians, in particular, for their attack and defense skills.

Now, let's go over a few notes on logistics. The sides of the map are balanced, more or less, by a lighthouse on the right side and a dragon tower on the left side. You gain far more advantage concentrating on the lighthouse (especially if you control sorceress heroes), rather than on the dragon tower. This gives you an additional boost in ship movement. Besides, you rarely acquire enough power to bother with the dragon tower. You also find a pair of stone liths in the north and south, which can shuttle you between the swampy area in the north and the desert area in the south.



Hermit's Isle

Hermit's Isle is a straightforward, relatively simple scenario compared to some of the more impossible scenarios to come. Each of the four warlords begins in the center island. Depending on which castle you start with, you can experience some rough terrain, but not much of it and not nearly enough to require the barbarian travel advantage. As for the surrounding islands, each holds one or two artifacts, usually some gold, and obelisks. If you feel strong and frisky

and no computer foes have invaded you, you may find it worthwhile to visit these islands to grab some of their goodies.

The northern castle is perhaps the best place to start this scenario, for two reasons. One, it contains two artifacts guarded by the least of the wandering armies. Second, and more importantly, it features a town behind it that is easily controlled and easy to defend from attackers from the south. Though someone can possibly attack the town by sea (or even take it before the northern hero does and set up a base of operation behind his lines), it's a bit of a struggle.

Like the north island, the west island contains two artifacts guarded by a single type of troop. The east and south islands each house two types of monsters guarding their two artifacts. Thus, as a starting point, the west island ranks a notch better than the south and east—and just below the north island. Of course, if you accumulate enough troops and enough power while roaming these islands in search of artifacts, it doesn't much matter.

Naturally, with all these castles, ships are vital for transporting your heroes. Make the sorceress your captain to hasten your movements. Another way to travel more quickly than normal is to use the Dimension Door spell with a warlock hero. The warlock hero can see farther than its counterparts, thus it can travel farther when it uses this spell. You can actually teleport from island to island with the increased vision of the warlock and Dimension Door. Unfortunately, as a level-four spell, Dimension Door costs far more than a shipyard and ship.

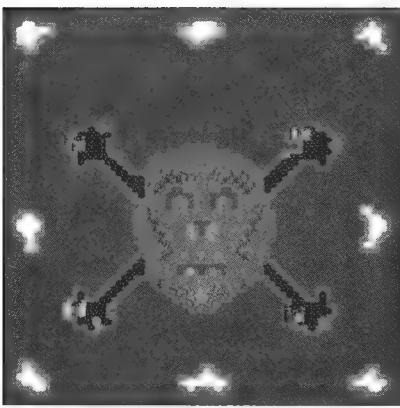
Only two towns are up for grabs, and these are the two in the middle of all four players. This area soon grows thick with heroes vying for control of the towns. If you prevail, however, and control one of these towns in the middle, you



can base a hero there and pick off any hero that wanders by. How can you be so cocksure of this? The attacking heroes must come from a great distance to reach these towns, usually by ship and far from their lines of supply, so they are usually less powerful than you. If you take a town, a good strategy is to keep two heroes, one who stays and guards the town and one who goes off adventuring.



Wherever you find a town in the middle of all the warlords that you think you can hold, take it, build it into a castle, and hold it. Controlling a central castle means you don't need to transport troops from far away like the others. Then, when you're ready to launch your offensives against the other opponents, you're midway between each of their corner castles.



Jolly Roger

Are you looking for a fair fight? Then skip the Jolly Roger. This map is impossible for a reason. If you can beat this scenario playing on the expert level against a computer genius, please call New World, and they will knight you. The lead tester on the project has beaten it playing on the expert level (starting without resources) against average computer opponents but wonders how anyone could defeat smarter opponents.

One reason Jolly Roger is so difficult is that an enemy castle, the one in the upper left, starts with everything completely built up—everything. You start in the lower right—with nothing. So while you struggle for base survival, enemy heroes fly towards you—sometimes within the first two weeks—with dragons. They have weak or no wandering troops to block their onslaught. It's a little like a 10-year-old kid climbing into the boxing ring against Mike Tyson and hoping for the best.

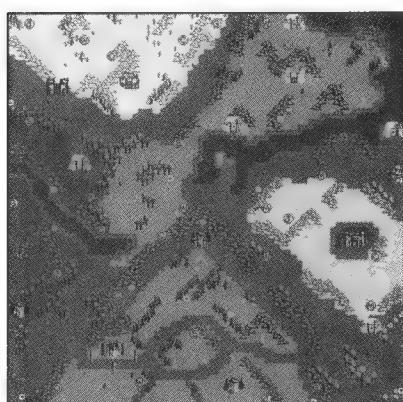
It might make your life a bit easier if any resources surrounded your castle, but none do. For the most part, you fight, right from the start, for everything you get. You receive few freebies in this game. You do have a gold mine nearby, which is nice. But to get the wood and ore needed to build troop strength, you must move up from the base of the skull and crossbones to the middle where all the resources

are crammed (making up the facial features of the Jolly Roger). Part of the trick of this map arrives in keeping the resources you need away from the computer heroes long enough for you to build the dwellings you need. Once you acquire some troops, you can pull back from the center and defend yourself a bit better.

In other words, your grand strategy consists of riding into the thick of things upon your pixie ponies and trying to hold open ground against ridiculously powerful opposition, including that one cheating opponent who starts with everything. Frequently, you stand there naked with dwarves and elves against dragons and hydras. I wish I could tell you an easy way around this predicament . . . but none exists.

I can share a little secret with you, however. Cast a View Resource spell early in the game, and you discover the existence of eight small islands on the outer edges of the map, far from the mainland. You can't see the islands in the spell, but you do see the resources on them, which look as if they're floating on the water. Since you have no reason to sail a ship out there, this spell is the only way you can discover their existence. Each island carries an obelisk and a magic lamp. The key to your success is to get to these islands before the computer does in order to secure the puzzle pieces of the ultimate artifact and to purchase the genies. If you can snag the genies from the islands ahead of the computer, you have a chance. To improve your odds, captain your ships with sorceress heroes. You need the speed boost on water she can give you.

You face one other problem, though. In order to buy genies, you must hold gems, and in order to procure gems, you must own a gem mine. A major secondary goal, then, is to locate and get to the gem mine. This proves no easy task against the power players, but you've got to do it.



Knight's Quest

Jolly Roger is impossible, but it has a terrible beauty to it that helps reduce the anxiety. Maybe you're just better prepared for it. With Knight's Quest, you face a very, very difficult scenario that many players find even more impossible than the Jolly Roger. Don't be surprised if you pull your hair in frustration, trying to win this one. Patience, patience. . . .



You, the miserable human, always start in the south with one castle, three towns, and one weak hero. The mighty computer starts with three heroes just outside your castle and three castles near your towns. Saying the towns belong to you seems like a sick joke. True, you own them at the outset, but all of them are located north of you—one in the swamp, one by a river, and one at the edge of a grassy area. The first thing the computer does is take these towns from you, and you can do little about it. The one silver lining in this black cloud is that, because you once owned the towns, you can see much more of the map than you normally do.

Fortunately, the three heroes knocking at your castle door are not mastodons, but beginners like you. The big trick in this scenario is to battle one of these heroes, kill it, and get back inside your castle on the same turn, so you are not left defenseless against the other two. Then, repeat the process. In order to accomplish this, you must quickly build up your garrison troops to keep the enemy from immediately wiping you out. If your garrison strength makes the three heroes shy away from wiping you out, instead of attacking your castle, they run around grabbing all the resources and gold you need—which is annoying, but not deadly. Employing this ruse, your first—and essential—goal is to kill these three heroes as fast as possible without letting the enemy capture your castle.

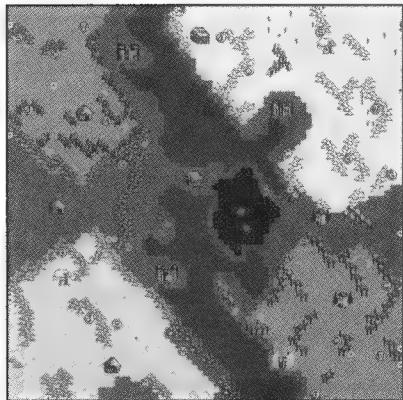
Realistically, to give yourself a fighting chance to win this scenario, start by setting the computer at no higher than average and you at the easy level. Once you really know your way around the map, you can increase the difficulty level, but it truly is masochistic. Don't even think about trying to hold your three northern towns. If you try to do so, you weaken yourself everywhere else. You don't start with enough gold in your area to thin out your forces. Since all the towns are clustered in the north near your opponents' locations, it is extremely difficult for you to better your situation. The plain fact is, the computer has way more castles than you, and, therefore, much more money—which puts you at a tremendous disadvantage. Humans don't pull their hair out for no reason.

It's best to use more than one hero on this map, because it's very large and wide open. The enemy storms at you from three different directions, so you need multiple heroes, some to defend and some to explore. To beat the computer, kill the three knights as quickly as possible, as mentioned, then take one town and build it into a castle. This is tough to pull off, because castles are expensive and the enemy comes gunning for you. Even if you can build the castle, you usually don't have the wherewithal to buy the troops to properly defend it. One of the biggest disappointments in this game comes when you finally erect a new castle, only to watch the computer waltz in and take it from you. Get used to it.

If you can capture a town, make it the southernmost town, which is closest to you. If you can build a castle there, concentrate all your energy on keeping it. This site lies furthest from your enemy's castles, which is helpful, and you can reinforce it with troops from your home castle. From this power base—if you can maintain it—you can eventually move west and start to clean up. Build a strong hero and move it into the southwest, a relatively safe area with room to build, as well as many mines and resources. If you can gather your strength there, you can then turn north and start your major offensive, picking off each northern opponent one by one.



Beware of unguarded artifacts. When a scenario is this difficult, you get no freebies. Be suspicious of anything that looks marvelously beneficial and easy to take; it probably means hidden danger. Once I excitedly picked up an artifact that was the answer to my dreams, only to find 50 rogues guarding it. Needless to say, they wiped me out.



Land Bridge

Here you find a good, straightforward, eminently-beatable scenario. The computer randomly selects your starting location in Land Bridge, as well as the type of castle you start with. What isn't random is that, wherever you begin, the computer players start very far away from you—which brings good and bad consequences. On the good side, it gives you more time to control your area and to build up your heroes and castle defenses. On the bad side, the enemy warlords are doing the same thing, and they grow to tremendous power in this scenario. No matter which location you start from, the computer expands rapidly and comes gunning for you.

Mobility provides the key to victory in this scenario. If you happen to begin in the snow or the desert on this map, pray that you also start with a barbarian castle. At the least, use barbarian heroes, so you don't suffer movement penalties in the bad terrain. If you can find a movement artifact, all the better.



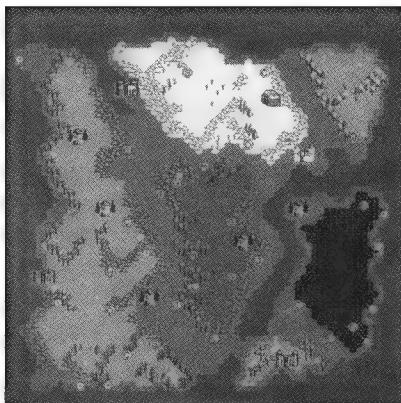
(The locations of the artifacts are always the same, but the type of artifact changes.) The snowy region—in fact, each of the starting areas—is chock full of the resources, artifacts, and other goodies you need to expand your power. So head out and fill up your larder. The opposition you face on these early hunting sorties is relatively weak compared to other maps, so have fun. . .

. . . because, soon enough, the enemy moves right past the land bridge into your sector to destroy you. Remember the *Heroes of Might and Magic* mantra: Build up your area first, creating one or two (preferably two here) strong heroes and packing your castle garrisons with strong forces. When your heroes and garrisons are strong, the computer tends to ignore them for a time until it's absolutely sure it can beat them. During that interlude, you can leave one hero home for defense and take one on the offensive.

Surprisingly, you can use ships to good advantage on this map. Whirlpools on either side of the land bridge don't block naval travel the way you might think. Find a good sorceress hero to captain your ship (as well as to give you extra ship movement), and you can negotiate the map with speed and stealth. As with most straightforward maps, target one opponent at a time and move swiftly to destroy it.

Which opponent? It always depends upon many varying factors in every game, but remember, the computer has had plenty of time to grow strong, and with each turn becomes more powerful. Therefore, attack the most powerful opponent first—something you can ferret out by using your thieves' guild. On the other hand, if you attack the weakest opponent first, you gain extra strength that can put you over the top of any final confrontation with the most powerful player. You decide, but do attack. If you wait at home, though it may take a while, the computer eventually prevails.

Finally, let me offer a word of warning about defense. You can take towns, build up castles, secure the surrounding area, easily—and perhaps, falsely—believing the region is secure. First, ships can land in many places, so you are at danger from the sea. Second, stone liths exist near some towns that can teleport enemy troops right behind your lines, so nothing is ever truly safe. Thus, it's a good idea to build multiple heroes and keep them nearby in case of enemy attack. (These sneak-attack options, by the way, are very good tactics to abuse in multiplayer games. Unlike the computer, most humans rarely watch for someone behind their lines and never check for enemy heroes. You can readily sneak in and snatch things out from under their noses.)



Pathways

Pathways may not appear to be a difficult scenario, but it can be surprisingly difficult if you're not prepared for it. The quirk of this map lies in the toughness of the wandering armies. Since it's a larger map, you have plenty of time and space to scour your region unmolested by enemy attackers. However, powerful armies—a class above the standard maps—guard most of the prime locations and goodies.

Even the town defenses test your mettle, and capturing, building, and holding towns provides the key to victory in Pathways. You want to prepare for the many battles to come. Multiple castles can make you powerful enough to withstand opponent onslaughts and to take off on your own. Castles give you the ability to recoup losses—which you can expect frequently in this maelstrom of conflict. Therefore, your goal should be to keep towns and turn them into productive army factories as fast as possible—then send these armies swarming across the land.

Tougher monsters can make this map frustrating in less obvious ways, as well, because of the computer's peculiar tendencies. Since the toughness and volume of these monsters limit your range of movement, sooner or later you must battle them. The computer doesn't like to fight tough monsters, to lose to tough monsters, or to even take losses from tough monsters—so it avoids them. But because it avoids them, it comes after you instead. It vanquishes any wimpy wandering forces, then moves along the pathway areas right toward you. These pathways provide the perfect surface for quick movement by all forces to all areas of the map. However, because tough troops guard the good stuff, you can't do much when you get where you want to go. You can travel anywhere, but you simply don't hold enough power to take anyone on. Meanwhile, the computer turns its attention toward you.

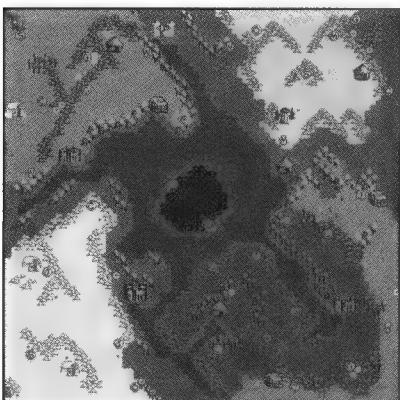
So what is a good warlord like you supposed to do? There is no clear-cut strategy to cut through this dilemma, but there are some things you can do. It's best to start in the southeastern castle, because it is the furthest from everyone else. For the same reason, the western castle offers your next best starting location. The additional distance gives you more time to increase your strength.



Second, keep your heroes and garrison forces as strong as you can. When they're strong, the computer reads your strength and avoids you until it becomes much stronger. If you're weak, it reads your weakness and comes swarming. In time, with much patience, and with a willingness to take losses, you can accumulate towns and castles that give you enough strength to not only defeat wandering armies, but also to move against your opponents one by one.



For those of you who like a good challenge or, at least, a good scrape, the best treasures—the three gold mines—are located in the swampy region. Bad, swampy terrain makes the region arduous enough, but these gold mines are also protected by massive amounts of hissing hydras. You need strong troops to defeat them, but if you can, you gain worthwhile rewards. A key to winning on this map is knowing which wandering armies to attack. Don't waste your forces on big armies that offer little rewards. Waste them on big armies that offer big rewards, such as these gold mines or powerful artifacts.



Rivers End

This relatively easy map (if there is such a thing after Claw and Squirrel Lake) features primarily weak monsters. You find a plenitude of mines and "stuff" on this map with relatively weak forces guarding them (so it's fun to run around and gather them up). All the warlord castles start close to each other, so you can go after one another quickly if you like. Finally, everyone starts with plenty of towns, enabling expansion to proceed smoothly without much interference from jealous counterparts.

So, from whence cometh the challenge? Therein lies the rub: there isn't much of one. Although each warlord starts with one town (and often two) near their home castle, there is not a plethora of towns on the map. This makes it easier, with many of the towns, for the computer to expand. They waltz into free towns, build them up into castles, and transform themselves into scary, formidable foes. But with so few towns so evenly distributed to each warlord, growth and

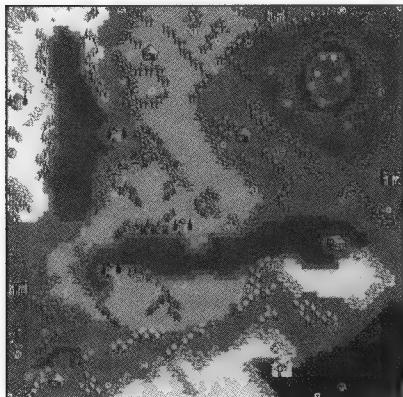
expansion becomes more even and predictable. Hence, you get the absence of any great challenge.

The only thing to watch out for on this map is the computer's ability to snatch up resources and artifacts much faster than you. Especially on a large map like this one, where there's only low-level wandering forces to thwart its wanderings, the computer acts like a vacuum cleaner sucking up free goods. This is how it gains strength. Your goal is to beat the computer at its own game. Get out there and grab mines, gold, and artifacts. Then, build up a superhero and quickly go after your foes without giving them time to grow invincible.

You start with any one of the four castles located near the middle of the map. One of the first things you notice is the lighthouse. A lighthouse serves as a flashing neon sign shouting, "Use ships, use ships." So use ships, find a sorceress captain to accelerate your movement on water, and move quickly to new areas to gather up their treasures.

The worst starting castle is the one in the middle of the map, because you can expand only in the direction that takes you past another castle. There is no other way out, and you can get trapped if you don't come to power fast enough. On the other hand (there's always an "other hand" in *Heroes*). You can turn the close proximity of your opponent into a sizable advantage by conquering him quickly. A swift victory dramatically hastens your expansion and increases your momentum.

If you own a barbarian castle, the snowy region can provide an excellent starting location, because barbarians move freely through snow and through the swamp just to the south. With so much bad terrain all around, attacks by land don't come easily. Beware the water, however. A whirlpool off the coast can pop up a few surprises in your backyard if you're not watchful. Keep some strong forces at home to prevent watery encroachment.



Shangri-La

Some maps are wide open; others make you feel like a rat in a maze. Shangri-La, defying the suggestion of its name, feels more like a rat maze than a beckoning frontier. Throw in high-powered wandering troops that guard everything and plenty of bad terrain, and you get a scenario that tests the intestinal fortitude of any good warlord like yourself.

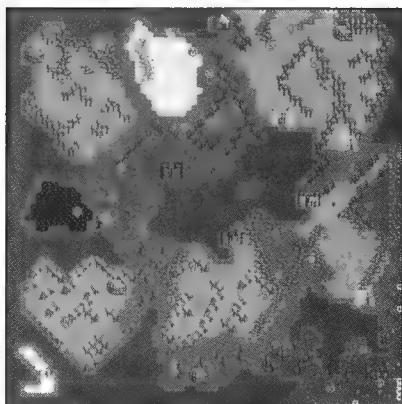


First, take notice of the rivers on this map. But before you pull out the oars, ships pose no real benefit on this map. You can build them if you want, you can visit much of the map with one, you can even find a whirlpool or two to teleport your troops. But you can't go very far in a ship in terms of placing yourself in key battle situations or resource opportunities. Here, ships are more luxury items than necessary or even advantageous battle vehicles.

One factor that makes this map a tough customer is the proximity of towns to home castles—or rather, lack of proximity. You generally start with towns a good distance from you, especially in the south where you begin near nothing. Starting at the southeastern castle with so far to travel between towns, makes this map a brain buster. Another castle with a nearby town stands close, just north of you. But nothing presents itself the other direction. It's very easy to get killed from this position.

Up north, the situation gets a little easier, because with the three opposing castles in the south so far away, you have more freedom to grow. If you don't mind being away from all the action for a while, you can easily control your region, gather your forces, and come south when you're fully prepared. When you do make your move, don't be overly concerned about the wandering armies blocking your way. They're not too tough, and the battles boost your experience points.

The trick to this map lies in grabbing the artifacts and other goodies on the center island—Shangri-La—before your competitors. The only way to get to the island is via a stone lith teleporter located in the southwest. Usually, you can use a spell like Dimension Door, perhaps with the increased vision of a warlock to increase its range of movement, to jump to an island like this. Still, it's too far away from shore. You'll just end up in the water. Instead, in this scenario, use the stone lith. Note that its location favors the southern castles (particularly the southwestern one) over the northern independent. Whatever your location, get to this lith as fast as you can with a powerful hero. If you can beat the four different and very tough troops on the island, you are rewarded with seven artifacts. Even if you are only strong enough to defeat the genies or the phoenix, you can still gain a couple of artifacts and some resources. Get to Shangri-La first with enough firepower, and this scenario is yours.



Squirrel Lake

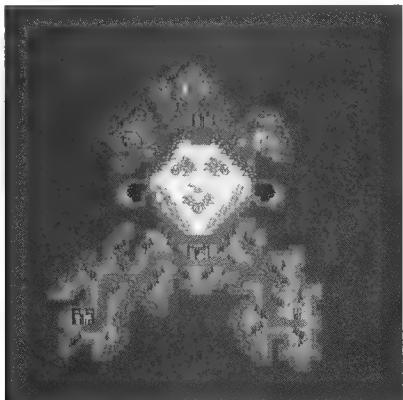
Squirrels? It even sounds easy, doesn't it? Squirrel Lake is quite easy and, thus, very popular. It is a fun map for beginners and for experts who have grown thoroughly disgusted with their inability to prevail on some of the more difficult maps. When you really get stuck, think of this lake like a resort, with victory as your therapy and rejuvenation.

Its isolation is what makes Squirrel Lake so easy. Regardless of where you begin, you find splendid solitude to expand in comfort and freedom. Castles and towns evenly dot the landscape, spread far apart. While you play it, this map seems smaller than it is. Your computer opponents take as long to reach you as it does for you to reach them, so you move about with much freedom for a time. You get ample room to roam, and when you're strong enough, you can attack an opponent with little risk of someone else attacking you. If you concentrate on creating a superhero, you usually gain the upper hand with enemy troops and can readily defeat them, one by one.

When you feel ready to attack, move across the lake with ships to reach your opponents in the speediest fashion. You can conquer an opponent very quickly this way. The problem with such a big map and such isolation, however, is that by the time you attack the home castles of your enemies, they have had time to build at least one other castle. The computer expands very rapidly, as always. So go by the lake, take out one of the castles nearest you, but be prepared to hunt around some for the second castle. It may take a while, but you will prevail.

Though this game might exact an offensive strategy, don't forget your defenses. Never leave your castle undefended or weak in this scenario. All four castles start with enough wood to build shipyards, and the computer is always aggressive with its ships. If it reads weakness in your castles, it comes after you. If it reads strength, you gain more time to launch your attacks without reprisals.

As a last note, artifacts can give you a very fast path to victory. You find one nearby each castle that the local hero can easily retrieve. Many more are located around the edges of the map. It takes a strong hero to collect these artifacts, however, because powerful wandering armies guard them. On the positive side, the computer leaves the artifacts alone for a while. On the negative, you must be very selective in your battles. Pick the ones you know you can win.



The Jester

Unlike Jolly Roger, which plays and feels impossible, The Jester (why do they appoint these brain busters such happy-sounding names?) is a very difficult, but beatable, scenario. If and when you win, you feel elated, knowing you have endured and overcome a huge challenge.

You need every advantage you can muster in this match. Take King Of The Hill. Usually, a scenario plays easier without King Of The Hill,

because the computer opponents can do some damage to each other before they reach you. But it is not always easier. In this scenario, sometimes when you don't play King Of The Hill, the opponent in the north—who starts out with one castle and two towns—quickly defeats your other two opponents in the south. They quickly become incredibly powerful, too powerful for you. So, the possibility exists that in The Jester, it is sometimes better to play with everyone ganged up against you. On the other hand, when all foes collectively attack you, they come quickly and stomp you, anyway. The point is, this is a hard map, however you play it.

What makes it so hard is your starting position. You're always in the middle with the other castles all around you. Like Crossroads, you begin with wood and ore (so it's best to start with a knight or barbarian to cut down your troop requirements). To get the other resources, you must move out and expand, but you're trapped by strong wandering armies. Ideally, one computer hero would battle these guardian forces for you, break on through, give you a chance to defeat it, and clear an exit path for you. Unfortunately, with your central location, enemy heroes tend to come in droves, preventing you from leaving to tend to your needs. You're supposed to expand, but instead, you're busy defending. As with Crossroads, therefore, winning largely becomes timing and luck. If the right hero breaks through at the right time, you stand a good chance. But it doesn't happen every time, so you must keep playing the map in order to defeat it. Don't get frustrated.

If and when you do break out with some strength, the key to victory on this map resides with the two opponents to the left and right of you. They start the scenario with strength almost equal to yours, so you can attack and beat them if you feel lucky. The trick is to conquer one of these side forces as fast as possible in order to boost your troop production and add to your coffers. Only then can you adequately prepare for the beast from the north.

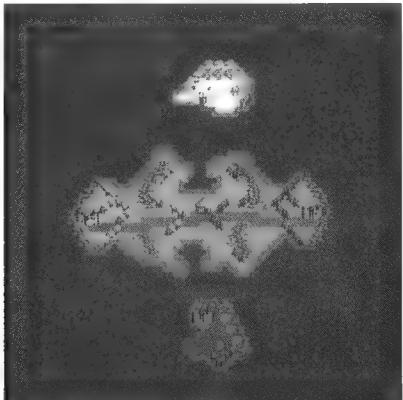
The top guy proves to be the demon you must really watch out for. He starts with the unfair advantage in castles, and he's protected from assault by desert. In addition to multiple castles, he governs three gold mines within easy reach. Thus, he grows very powerful very rapidly and soon comes after you—most of the time, to eat you up as if you were a Halloween snack. It takes him a little time, however, to reach you. In the meantime, you must conquer both of the opponents on either side of you. That equalizes things a bit, but the northern warlord still holds those three gold mines. Fortunately, if you get that far in the game, money dwindles in importance, because you have all your dwellings and most of the troops you need. At some point, you can spend only so much money. All that's left is a tremendous one-on-one battle that can go either way and often swings back and forth before the final conquest.

Consider these points as you go about your business:

- U After you defeat either or both of the castles on the sides, never leave them weak or undefended. If the computer reads weakness here, it sends ships south down the sides of the map and attacks your holdings. If you keep these strong, the computer drives south into the middle toward your home castle—right into your strength.
- U In the Jester's ears, you can see pockets of artifacts guarded by phoenixes. Though you cannot land a ship here without fighting phoenixes if you are hefty enough to defeat the red birds, you return home with many powerful artifacts. It's well worth the risk.
- U You normally don't need to build ships, because when you require one, you can usually steal one from the computer. They often sail up in ships, which you can swipe after you kill them. So don't waste gold or wood on shipyards.

The only real chance you get to beat your northern opponent is if it sends heroes stuffed with artifacts. This makes them powerful, of course, but it also makes them wary of attacking you, unless they are vastly superior in strength. If leery enough, they may retreat in combat. It's a small chance based entirely on luck, in that you don't know if any of the north heroes will sport artifacts, but at least it's a chance.





Two If By Sea

In the words of one New World tester, this map is “very small and very boring.” Right off the bat, the two computer warlords start with a huge advantage—three gold mines and tons of resources on each of their two islands. In addition, they always start with the sorceress and the warlock castles, so they soon add phoenixes and dragons to their powerful armies.

What makes this map so boring is your inevitable defeat when you play by yourself.

You always start with a castle on the left. So if you play solo, the two super powers from the islands join with the last castle on your right and briskly annihilate you. One comes across the land, two come by sea (hence, the map’s title), and you can do little about it. Hypothetically, it’s possible for you to win, but it takes more luck than skill.

Everything about this scenario points to playing with two human players. Then, it transforms into a nifty struggle between the human forces and the superhuman forces. You may not win, but the odds improve greatly—and so do the battles.

If you insist on playing solo (as you should; why just take my word of its foolhardiness), your big bet here is to build more than one strong hero. Take control of the gold mine near you and collect the nearby artifact as soon as possible. If you get a warlock castle (the type of castle is random), it’s a little easier, because you defeat some archers quickly with your gargoyles and griffins. You start with enough resources to establish decent control in your region. However, you must get the artifacts near you before the computer gets them to gain even the slimmest chance of winning.

While you battle for artifacts, another ray of hope comes via the ultimate artifact. Visit the obelisks at hand to discover the location of this precious relic and try to get it as soon as possible. Your single advantage is that it usually lies somewhere on your island. If you snag it, you go from a slim to a fighting chance. Or maybe not. To put this match into perspective, by the end of the first week, enemy heroes have begun to feast on your island—guaranteed. By the second or third weeks, the dragons and phoenix arrive. Then, it’s all over. The dragons are the worst, because even if you own a mage guild, your spell power can’t help you against dragons.



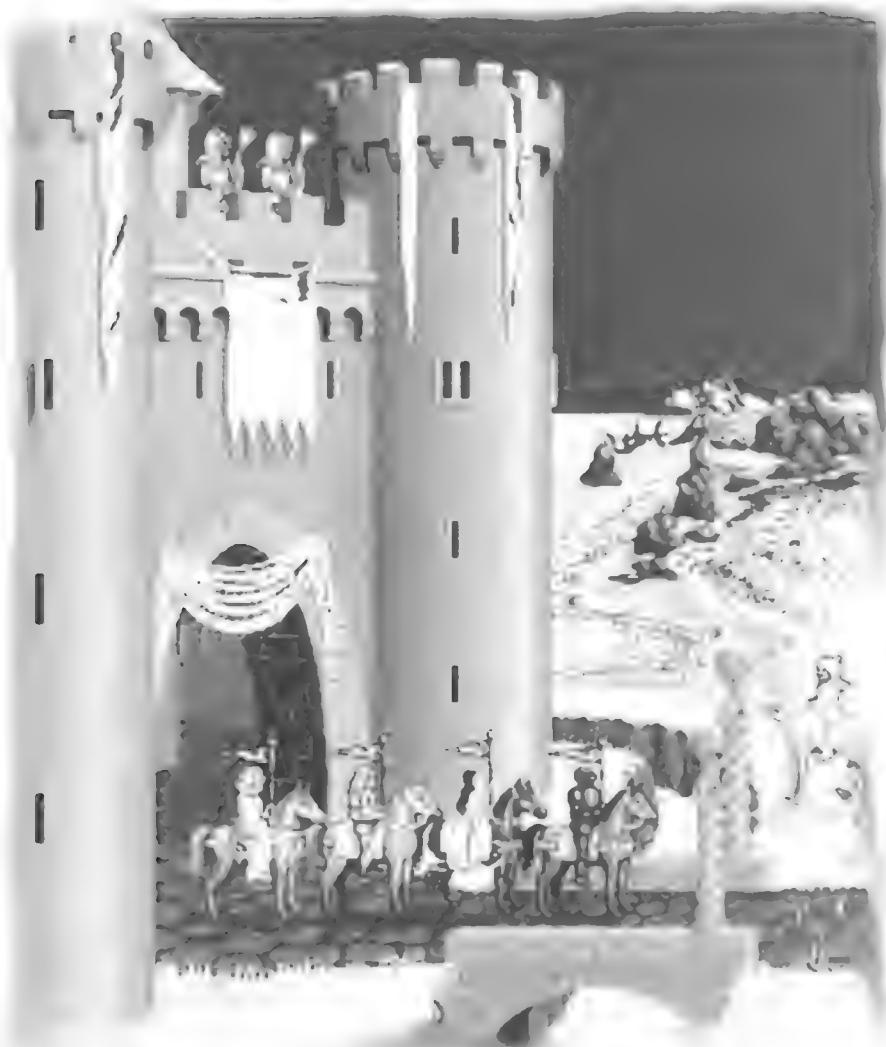
Not that you get much chance to care in a single-player game, but you have no way to build ships on your island, and the only way to invade the warlock and sorceress islands is by sea. What do you do? When the invaders come, you conquer them and take their boats. Stealing boats gives you the only way to get off your isle. At least it saves you money and a few hunks of wood.



Sooner or later, you grow tired of hunkering down in your lonely castle, always fighting the computer with the odds stacked against you and no one to give you assistance. Perhaps you want new kinds of challenges, something other than just conquering three opponents on a given map. That is why the good designers at New World developed a campaign game and multiple-player (or multiple-warlord) games—to keep your interest well-fired. The next section of the book leads you through the fun and challenging world of campaigns and games with more than one human.

Part III

Special Warfare



Chapter Thirteen



Multi-Warlord Games

As you can see from the following table, not all standard game maps are available for multi-warlord (or multiplayer) games, and vice versa. Figuring out which maps you can and cannot play—based on whether you’re playing a standard, a two-player, or a multiple-player (three or four players) game can be confusing. You can play Jolly Roger, for example, only as either a standard or a two-player game, but not with three or four players. What’s more important is the reason you can’t play all of the maps in every conceivable way. This stems from the fact that what makes a good you-against-the-computer map may differ from what makes a good you-against-some-humans map or you-and-a-buddy-against-the-computer map.

Most of the standard game maps translate well to multiplayer games without any changes, but the designers felt that some standard maps, such as Claw and Knight’s Quest, don’t offer enough fun or challenge—or make sense—as multiplayer games. (Two maps, Jolly Roger and Two If By Sea, work as two-player games but not as three or four-player games.) Therefore, the designers created a few maps designed specifically as multiplayer games. As indicated in Table 13-1, these special scenarios are Archipelago, Continentia, and Four Corners.

This chapter describes each of these three maps in detail, suggests the standard game maps that make for good multiplayer games, and gives you some general tips on good multiplayer strategy. By the way, good multiplayer strategy applies regardless of you play Hot Seat, Network, Modem, or Direct Connect. Whatever your technical connection, effective game strategy depends on the map you play and the number of players.

**Table 13-1** Game Maps for Heroes of Might and Magic

| <u>Standard Game Maps</u> | <u>Multiplayer Maps</u> | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| | <u>3-4 Players</u> | <u>2 Players</u> |
| N/A | Archipelago | Archipelago |
| Claw | N/A | N/A |
| Around the Bay | Around the Bay | Around the Bay |
| Badlands | Badlands | Badlands |
| Close Quarters | Close Quarters | Close Quarters |
| N/A | Continentia | Continentia |
| Crossroads | N/A | N/A |
| Desert Isle | Desert Isle | Desert Isle |
| Dragon Pass | Dragon Pass | Dragon Pass |
| N/A | Four Corners | Four Corners |
| Four Nations | Four Nations | Four Nations |
| Hermit's Isle | Hermit's Isle | Hermit's Isle |
| Jolly Roger | N/A | Jolly Roger |
| Knight's Quest | N/A | N/A |
| Land Bridge | Land Bridge | Land Bridge |
| Pathways | Pathways | Pathways |
| Rivers End | Rivers End | Rivers End |
| Shangri-La | Shangri-La | Shangri-La |
| Squirrel Lake | Squirrel Lake | Squirrel Lake |
| The Jester | N/A | N/A |
| Two If By Sea | N/A | Two If By Sea |

N/A = Not Available

Tips of the Multiplayer Trade

First off, let's define the term "multiplayer." When I say a multiplayer game, I mean either two human players playing head-to-head or two human players playing together against two computer opponents. There are other options, of course, but these are the best ones. Frankly, it's boring to play three players against one computer player. The best game, regardless of the map, consists of two against two. Though some people swear by four-player hot seat games—which can be great fun—but humans take too long to take their turns. By the



time four players finish and it gets around to your turn again, you've forgotten what day it is, much less what's going on in the game.

“Right Wing” Humans

Human players tend to play conservatively when playing against each other, which means sticking around their castles until they acquire plenty of troops for both adventuring and castle defense. This “right wing” tendency holds especially true after they've played *Heroes*, because they learned what happens when they spread themselves too thin, expanding too fast. They get killed.

Thus, when you play against only one other person, it's sometimes better to throw your cautious nature to the winds and ride out from your castle like lightening. If you do, you can pick up the most valuable resources and artifacts before your conservative opponent saddles up his horse. This way, you play much more like the computer, which cleans up landscape treasures like a vacuum.

Predictable Humans

Not only are human players conservative, they are predictable. For example, since it usually pays off to build one main hero into a superhero, human players tend to follow this strategy slavishly. Therefore, you can use this predilection to your advantage and employ the opposite strategy. Swarm out of your castle with two or three heroes, trying for a more balanced attack and avoiding any confrontation with your opponents' main heroes. In this way, you can secure artifacts, resources, and towns faster than they can, and use two or more strong heroes when the final confrontation takes place.

 Try to get a castle that is near to your opponent and that geographically blocks him from your rear areas. Build up this castle with strong defense and a good hero. Then, you can effectively prevent him from moving past you while you build up a “safe area” behind you in a leisurely, unfettered fashion. Castles, resources, etc.

Tunnel Vision Humans

When playing multiplayer games, you don't see the moves of your human opponents like you do when you play against the computer. If the movement of a human opponent is within your “known” map—the territory you opened up by



exploration—you see where the movement ends up, but you don't see what happened during the turn. Therefore, against a human, you should explore as much of the map as possible. (Get a warlock scout—with his expanded vision—and push out all the boundaries of the map.) Then, at the start of each turn, you can check to see if any enemy hero has suddenly popped up within striking distance of your holdings. In multiplayer games, it's easy to not pay attention until it's too late.



Use ships against humans opponents, with their tunnel vision, more often than against the computer. As they blindly focus on what they're doing at the moment, you can load up a ship and sail into their bailiwick with far greater ease than the computer ever lets you get away with. Ships are the key to surprise attacks, and surprise attacks are the bane of human foes. Make sure to use a sorceress as your captain if you can. With her double movement on water, you can often attack an opponent's home castle with complete stealth.

Expand Your Vision

The reason the computer is such a tough opponent is that it knows the map, as well as the strength of your hero troops and castle garrisons. This kind of knowledge makes the computer focused and efficient. You can never be as all-seeing or all-knowing as the computer, but when you play against human opposition, you can use some tricks to expand your vision.

First, you can use your thieves' guild much more in multiplayer games than you can in standard games. With the thieves' guild, you know how your opponents' power compares with you. Also, since human opponents, unlike the computer, are usually conservative and predictable, you can more or less foresee what they will do, based upon their relative strength. For example, if you peek into your thieves' guild and see that a foe has two castles to your one, you know you're in deep trouble and must somehow narrow the gap quickly—taking one away from him or buying one of your own. Or, if your opponent has fewer troops and resources than you, you can expect him to stay close to home until he builds up his forces. Therefore, you can probably take more risks in adventuring, leaving your garrisons weaker than you might if you expected imminent attack.

Second, buy a mage guild and stockpile spells, such as View Mines, View Resources, View Heroes, and View All. Because your vision of enemy movements is limited, nothing give you peace of mind better than spells that raise the cloak of invisibility.

For example, if you play on a large map, the View Mines spell cast early in the game can tell you where on the map your opponent starts. By seeing which mines fly his colors, you can guess he's in the castle nearest to those mines. View Mines is a first-level spell, so you can get it quickly and plan your attack with optimum efficiency.

You can also cast the View Resources spell and get similarly important intelligence. Cast it early, and you can see where the key resources are located, particularly wood and ore, which all warlords need. Then, cast it three or four turns later and, by noticing which ones are missing, identify where your opponent has been.

With some maps, if you know the location of an opponent's castle, you automatically know what kind of castle he owns—and that's dynamite knowledge to have. In Four Nations, for example, the castle type in each location is set. The warlock castle is always in the northwest, the knight castle is always in the southwest, and so on. Therefore, if you use a first-level spell to find out which castle a foe has, you know the type, as well. If you know the type, you know the kind of troops he wants and the resources he needs to get them. Let's say you're battling a warlock. You know the warlock needs sulfur to fill out his troops. So, you check the locations of the sulfur mines and try to get there first.

However you can accomplish it, your goal when playing against human players is to be as smart as the computer in knowing the opposition. The computer sets an impossible standard in this instance, but you must do whatever you can to narrow the gap.

The Best Standard Game Maps for Multiplayer Games

Most of the standard maps work well as multiplayer maps. However, the best are the largest maps, because they usually give you the most "stuff"—artifacts, resources, treasure, etc. This ensures that everyone gets enough of what they need to build up their forces and that you have enough time and elbow room to collect these treasures without destructive interference.

Two If By Sea

This map is an exception to the "bigger is better" rule for multiplayer games. In fact, this map is incredibly small, but its set-up is perfect for a two-player game.



As mentioned, you can play Two If By Sea as a standard game or as a two-player game, but not as a three or four-player game. One look at the map tells you why. The computer players to the north and south of the large center island are loaded for bear. They can quickly sail to the big island and launch their attacks on the relatively defenseless inhabitants. It wouldn't be a fair fight if you started on either of the small two islands.

Two if by Sea is actually a much better two-player game against the computer than a standard game. It's just too tough as a standard game. The computer islands are just too well stocked and you don't really have a chance. It can become very frustrating as you get whipped every time.

But when you and a chum join forces on the beleaguered island, you may not be able to win either—but at least you have a fighting chance and it's a lot more fun. The goal is to share whatever you gain on the island with your friend so that you can become powerful enough to ward off the attacks of the two powerful computer warlords. Just remember that there's no way for you to build ships on your island. If you want to attack one of the small islands, you have to steal one of the computer boats.

Land Bridge

Land Bridge defines the “bigger is better” rule for multiplayer games. As with Continentia, one of the special multiplayer games, you have two large land masses separated by a thin waterway, thus there is plenty of room for adventuring and the map is filled with “collectibles.” Moreover, relatively-weak troops guard most of these treasures so it's easy to build up your power and get ready for some epic battles, and every castle has a town nearby that it can be captured easily.

The locations of the human warlords are not set on this map as they are in Two if by Sea, so you can end up in any of the four castles surrounding the land bridge. If you're playing with a friend against two computer opponents, all three possible types of setups are fun to play. With one, you control an entire side of the map and you work together to sweep across the land bridge to the other side. With another, you start diagonally across the water from each other and you can squeeze one of the foes between you, then turn on the other. Finally, you can control either the top or bottom of the screen, joining forces on one side or the other to sweep up or down against your foes.



Whatever starting position you and your co-player receive, one of the best strategies is to take the town on the land bridge. When two players work together it's much easier to take and to hold this town than it is for one player. And when you control this town, you control most of the movement on the map. Furthermore, with a strong, centrally-located castle like this, you can easily return for more troops when you need them.

Jolly Roger

For the same reason that Two if by Sea is a good two-player game against the computer, Jolly Roger is a terrific two-player games against the computer. In both scenarios, the computer begins with such a tremendous advantage in gold, resource, and troop strength, that it's nearly hopeless when you are playing by yourself, but if you gang up against the computer with another person you might actually make a go of it. In this two-player game, you and your partner always begin in the southern castles and the two computer warlords start up in the north—where they get more of everything.

In Jolly Roger, try this strategy if you and your partner start on adjacent Jolly Roger cross bones. One player grows strong enough to thwart access to either of your two bones, while the other sails off to some of the eight islands for artifacts and obelisks.

Close Quarters

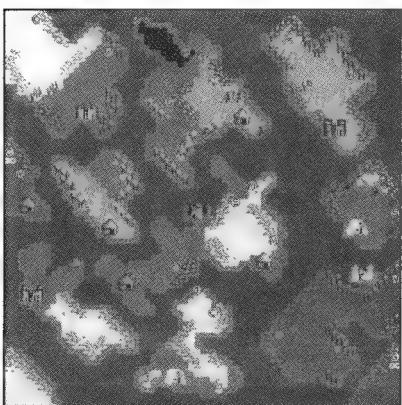
Close Quarters also defies the “bigger is better” rule. This offers your best bet if you’re looking for a game that doesn’t take six months to play out. Because of the warlords close proximity to each other, you don’t spend weeks trying to fight each other—you can’t help but fight one another. Even if you play with all human opponents who tend to move sluggishly away from their castles, you still bump into each other very early in the game.

Whether you play with four human players or two players against the computer, all the action on this map takes place smack dab in the middle, around the only two towns on the map. Control these towns, and you win every time. When you gang up against the computer, you can let them take one of these towns, but don’t let their castle forces grow strong. Keep on attacking them to keep them honest.



Special Multiplayer Maps

All three of the specially designed maps for the multiplayer games are big maps. Even Four Corners which appears on the small side (like Four Nations, which it resembles)—plays large, because the warlords begin on individual islands off the coast of the main island. These maps feature many towns, which allows for powerful expansion and makes it difficult to play a short game. By the time you grow strong enough to attack your opponents, most likely, they have expanded into multiple towns and are tough to root out.



Archipelago

My dictionary says an archipelago is any large body of water with many islands. With its eleven islands, this map definitely qualifies as an archipelago. It's a fun scenario with time to grow—though not indefinite time—and plenty of places full of treasure to visit.

However, it is also a surprisingly difficult map due to its many free towns (seven). Your computer foes can end up with castles all over the place, rather than in specific regions.

As with most scenarios, this map contains no blue region—that is, a region in which the blue opponent concentrates its forces. Instead, the blue foe finds towns anywhere on the map and builds a castle there. As a result, you may think you have defeated an opponent and not understand why it remains on the map. Then, you spot a ship sailing by with a blue flag. It can take quite a while to weed out all of your opponents' forces.

You begin in any one of the four castles located on islands near the corners of the map. Because of the essential need for ships, the sorceress castle, with the sorceress's extra movement on sea, provides one of best castles to start with. At the very least, all warlords should have some sorceress heroes when they push out to sea to explore. The barbarian is an excellent choice, as well, because most of the islands feature swamp or desert (one even has snow), and barbarians remain unaffected by this bad terrain.

As might be expected with an archipelago, the trick to this map is ships. Lots and lots of ships. With ships, you can move briskly to adjacent islands to gain control of them before your opponents do and to engage in final combat with your foes. Four whirlpools spaced around the center of the map make sea travel even speedier.

Not one of the “starting” castles bestows terrific benefits, but the one on the southeast island wins the booby prize. It’s swampy, the whirlpool in the island’s bay gives your foes easy access, and less resources are available to you here than on the other islands. Its only saving grace stems from a nearby slip of land, relatively unprotected, containing two artifacts. The southwest castle also features a similar slip of land nearby with two artifacts. Four towns lay in close proximity to the southwest castle, so it may offer the best starting position.



If you can gain enough power to collect some of the artifacts and treasures on four of the islands—east, west, southwest and southeast—you can gain incredible, perhaps unstoppable, momentum. The east island, in particular, contains five artifacts, a town, a gold mine, and a crystal mine. Of course, with that kind of booty, you should expect major opposition—and you won’t be disappointed.

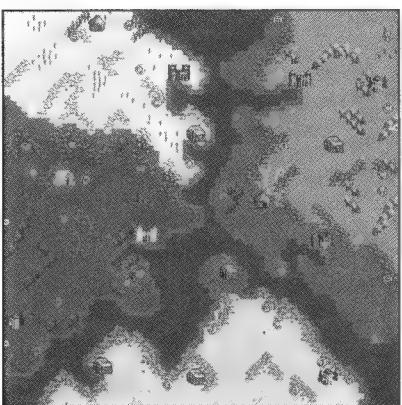
Wherever you begin, take at least one of the towns near you and quickly build it into a castle to give you the extra income and troop production. If one of these towns matches your castle type, all the better. From this base, you can decide which adjacent foe to push against, remembering to leave plenty of troops for defense against attacks while you’re off adventuring. Target one opponent first, remove him, then go to the next one instead of creating multiple battle fronts. Gradual expansion seems the best way to go. You won’t have much success with two or three front wars in this scenario.

Each of the “starting” four islands comes equipped with a wood and ore mine. These are particularly beneficial to knight and barbarians castles, as well as for building ships. However, you must go exploring for all the other resources you need. Since the other resources are so vital to your needs and are spread so far afield on this map, use the View Mines and View Resources spells to conserve time and energy. When you know which island harbors the mines you want, go directly there instead of wandering around in search of them.

Draw a line from north to south down the middle of the map. The three islands along this line are connected by stone liths. You can use these liths to quickly capture several towns. A good strategy is to capture either the north or south island (whichever is closest) as fast as you can. These islands are relatively undefended, and if you don’t grab them up, another warlord will. After you capture one of the islands, build the town into a castle and secure the island with troops—because others will come for it. When you grow strong enough, enter the stone lith, and it transports you to one of the other two islands. The center island, in particular, offers good opportunities for expansion, with its three towns and essential mines.



Move slowly and carefully on this map. With so many enemy ships bobbing about, an enemy hero can pop up anywhere. If you spread your forces too thin, you cannot repel them. You can't leave yourself open anywhere, or the computer comes after you—especially on the higher difficulty levels. Conquer your island, build up castles, then move to the next island and do the same. To the slowpoke goes the spoils.



Continentia

Three large land masses of widely different terrain—snow and swamp to the west, desert to the south, and grasslands to the east—converge in Continentia, separated only by narrow waterways. It's a very big map with many free towns (11) and lots of wide open spaces to explore in relative peace.

You can begin in one of four castles—two positioned on the western land mass and two found on the eastern land mass. Each castle sits

within a different terrain. The one in the northwest is in snow; the one in the southwest is in swampland. In the east, grassland surrounds the northern castle, and the southern castle lies in a strip of dirt bordered by the grassland. If you're in one of the western castles, therefore, it's best to have a barbarian castle and barbarian heroes whose movement is unaffected by bad terrain.

Another feather in the barbarian's cap is the desert land mass to the south, which starts without castles or heroes, but features four towns for the taking. The barbarian is the only hero who can move swiftly over desert sands without an artifact. With the region's many artifacts and mines (in addition to the towns), this island offers a prime adventuring spot for a swift traveler. The ideal situation is to position a barbarian castle in the swampy, southwestern territory, so you can make a quick move to the southern desert before your foes.

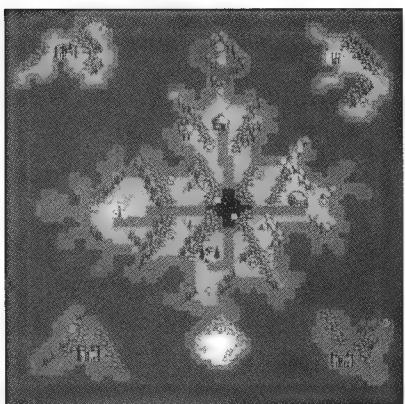


Stuck in the northwestern snow on this map? Feeling grumpy in the grassy, northeastern castle, so far from the desert continent? Not to worry. Grab your wood mill and build a shipyard as fast as you can. Then, set your sails for the whirlpool just off your eastern shore. It deposits you way down in the southwestern corner of the map, where you can easily launch attacks into the desert or the swampy region. If water is not your cup of tea, use the four stone liths to transport yourself. There's one in every region except the desert.

Due to the narrow waterways between the continents, you have little need for the sorceress' extra movement on water. However, because you play this map against humans, you can use water travel to surprise unwitting opponents. If they do not push out from their home castle—and thus out of the area on the map they can see—you can swiftly move troops by water without detection.

Essentially, it's best to first conquer the opponent sharing your continent and then to move across the water—or use the stone liths to jump over it—to attack the other side. If you move from your region too quickly, you make yourself extremely vulnerable to the foe right next to you. On the other hand, if you conquer that foe first, you don't need to worry as much about your home front.

Hunkering down in your home castle is definitely not the strategy to follow on this map. It's so big, you need to explore as much of it as possible. Your enemies can come from a great many directions, and if you do not increase your range of vision by exploring the map, you can't see their movement. If your opponent starts their move, for example, in a region you have not explored and end up in another region not explored by you, you don't know where they are or what they're up to. Clear out the map, so you can watch all their moves from the greatest possible distance.



Four Corners

Like boxers in the ring, each of the four warlords starts in a castle on a small island in one of the four corners of the map. Eventually, you have to find each other—usually in the center island—and slug it out. The type of castle you find in each corner is randomly selected, and you find yourself in a different corner each time you play. This map makes for a good multiplayer game, because the island from which everyone starts isn't necessarily the direction from which they attack the main island. You never know whether or not they're coming after you until they're suddenly there.

One look at this map with all its water and island solitude, and you know ships are going to play a major role. In case it's not obvious, each island features a mill for wood—a not-so-subtle hint you need to build boats if you want to expand and conquer. Because of the water, it's best to begin with a sorceress castle to take advantage of her increased mobility on ships. At the very least, use sorceress heroes as the captains of your vessels.



Growth and expansion can come easily on your island, because the warlords are far enough away from each other that you don't end up immediately fighting each other. A few enemy heroes might invade early, but their forces are usually weak, and you can readily handle them. You start with some of the resources you need nearby, but you must go out and supplement them when you want to buy your more powerful troops. Fortunately, these resources are spread out, as well, and you have room to maneuver without bumping into too many foes.

You can conquer this map in one of two ways. One strategy is to attack and conquer your opponents' island castles as fast as you can. A good way to achieve this is to combine a few powerful barbarian troops under the command of a sorceress hero. It's her job to get you to the islands as quickly as possible. Then, the uncouth barbarians do the grunt battle work. If you can conquer one of the two opponents next to you, you can control one whole side of the map. From that direction, you can invade the middle island and work your way across it toward the last two islands on the other side.

The second road to victory is to aggressively attack the main island in order to sweep up all of the extra resources—particularly ore that accumulates there. (You find four mines at each spike of the island.) The home islands are entirely bereft of ore mines, which all heroes need. So if you don't get lucky and acquire the ore you need from the random resources on your island, you must compete for them on the main island. All of the artifacts and obelisks reside on the center island, as well. Most of them are guarded by extremely nasty wandering armies. Therefore, this road is definitely not for the faint of heart. If you decide to take it, bring powerful warriors—knights or barbarians, in particular, for their attack and defense skills.

Now, let's go over a few notes on logistics. The west and east sides of the center island are balanced, more or less, by a lighthouse on the east and a dragon tower on the west. You gain far more advantage concentrating on the lighthouse (especially if you have sorceress heroes) than on the dragon tower. You rarely have enough power to bother with the dragon tower, anyway, and taking this gives you an additional boost in ship movement.

You also find a pair of stone liths in the north and south that can shuttle you between the swampy area in the north and the desert area in the south. Though these sections contain artifacts and gold mines, they are guarded by severe opposition. The center of the island contains artifacts, mines, and high-powered wandering armies, as well. However, it's also the meeting place for many heroes. Your best strategy may be to take control of one of the sides of the island, then, instead of moving through the crowded center, attack an adjacent side by land or sea.

Chapter Fourteen



The Art of Campaigning

Are you fascinated with the Crusades? Can you imagine suiting up in your armor and riding out for foreign and distant lands where you wage battle against unknown opponents—not to return for many years, if ever? You can taste a bit of this experience with the Campaign Game in *Heroes of Might and Magic*.

In the Campaign, you choose to play one of four warlords for a series of eight different scenarios. Your choices are Lord Ironfist, the knight, the barbarian Lord Slayer, the sorceress Queen Lamanda, or the warlock Lord Alamar. You face so many different situations during this long campaign that no one choice is better than another as to which warlord identity you assume. Each brings its moments in the sun; each features its moments in the dog house. Whichever warlord you choose, you play from that warlord's castle in each of the scenarios. The castle locations and castle types are permanently set in the campaign scenarios to ensure a fair fight, regardless of which warlord you choose to play.

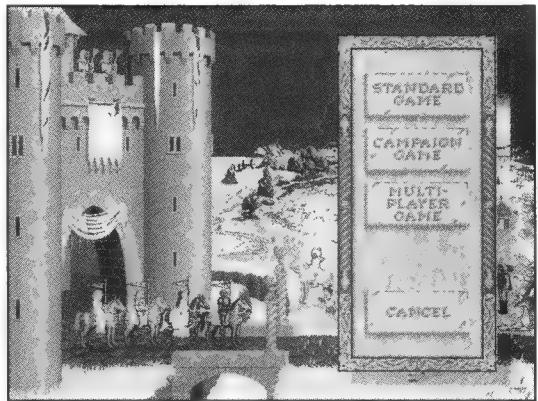


Figure 14-1

When you choose Campaign Game, all scenario options except one are automatically selected for you.

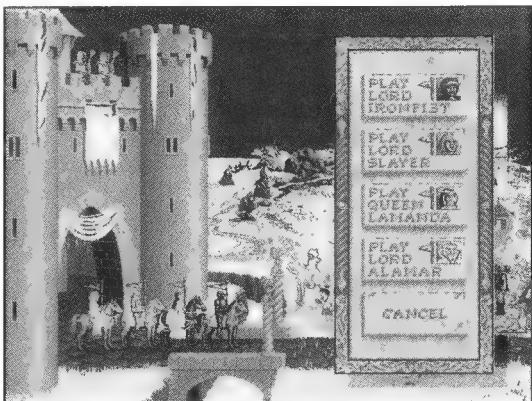


Figure 14-2

For the campaign, you choose which one of four warlords you become for all eight scenarios.

goal applies for each scenario in the campaign. This may require you to take control of a specific location on the map, for example, or to be the first to find the ultimate artifact. Remember that, most of the time, you don't try to achieve total domination. You just try to beat the other warlords to the stated goal in each scenario.

What's time standard for completing the campaign should you shoot for? If you can accomplish it in less than 500 days, you're doing extremely well. Peter Ryu, the head of testing and quality assurance at New World did it in just 346 days—but that's spectacular. Don't fret if you play 700 to 1,000 day campaigns—or longer—until you know the maps, the objectives of each campaign, and the best way to reach them. You can burn up many weeks roaming these maps as you find your way.

To help you more readily plot your course, this chapter describes the nine maps available for the campaign. Although a campaign consists of eight maps, there are nine maps in all. This is because in four of the maps—campaigns five through eight—your goal is to attack and conquer a specific warlord. First you conquer the knight, then the barbarian, the sorceress, and finally, the warlock. Obviously, you cannot attack yourself in one of those scenarios, so one of the maps drop out of the campaign, depending upon which warlord you choose to play.

How can one briefly describe these maps? Let's not beat around the bush. All of them are very, very, very difficult. Some are incredibly tough. Unlike the standard games in which much of the difficulty comes from a scarcity of

In fact, as you will see, most of the variables on the campaign maps are pre-determined, rather than randomly determined as with most of the standard maps.

The goal of the campaign game is to complete all eight scenarios as fast as possible. The clock runs through every mission, and you have only one score at the end of the campaign. Thus, if you finish the first campaign on the sixth day, you start the second campaign on day seven, and so on. Unlike standard games, in which the scenario goal is always the annihilation of all opponents, a less global



resources that requires you to fight to get what you need, most of the campaigns start with the kinds of resources you need relatively close at hand. What makes the campaign so challenging is the strength and quality of your opposition. In the aforementioned “warlord” maps, for example, the target warlord starts with everything and just waits for you to arrive at its castle gate. Week after week, it purchases more and more troops without losing a single soldier. It grows extraordinarily powerful, and by the time you reach the castle, the force you face can be truly startling and mortifying. You take many losses battling to get there, while the chump in the castle fattens up for your arrival. Yes, you might say, but at least I have gained much experience in those battles. Unfortunately, however, the computer warlord started the scenario with all the experience it needs. Are the campaigns a lost cause then? By no means. Armed with a bit of knowledge, you can come through the campaign with flying colors.

Converting Campaign Maps to Multiplayer and Standard Game Maps

One of the drawbacks to the campaign maps is that if you want to play one of them, you usually play all of the maps to get to it. There is a way around this limitation, however, that enables you to change any campaign map into a map you can play at any time. To do this, you must exit the game and work some file management magic in either DOS or Windows.

Start by beginning the campaign as you normally would and move into the Campaign One game screen. Immediately save it with a name such as CAMPONE (so you know which campaign map you are saving), then quit the game. In DOS or Windows, you can find the saved game within the *Heroes* directory in a sub directory called *Games*. Rename the file, exchanging the existing extension (.CGM) with a new one called either .GM2, .GM3, or .GM4, depending upon how many players (from two to four) you want to play the game. Thus, if you want to play the first campaign map with two players, rename the saved game from CAMPONE.CGM to CAMPONE.GM2. Then, when you restart the game, you make four choices to find your saved game:

1. Choose Load Game from the main menu.
2. Choose Multiplayer Game from the next screen.
3. Choose Hot Seat from the next screen.
4. Choose Two Players from the next screen.



If you want to play the map with three or four players, change the extension to either .GM3 or .GM4 and choose either three players or four players for a hot seat game. Playing the campaign map in multiplayer situations is not flawless, however. First, in order to save any campaign map other than the first one, you must play every map before it. Second, if the first player in the game dies, the game ends. The second, third, or fourth players can't continue after the first player dies.

Despite these limitations, playing some of the campaign maps as multiplayer games can be quite fun. For example, in the knight "warlord" campaign, you might compete against a second player who is the all-powerful knight. In campaigns two and four, two large maps, you must defeat everyone, like in the standard and multiplayer maps. Some of the campaign maps don't work as well out of their campaign setting. The map for Campaign One, for example, is just too small. In Campaign Three, the goal—first to find the ultimate artifact—is just too limiting to pit players against each other.

To play any of the campaign maps as standard, single-player games, you follow a similar file-renaming routine as the one explained above (changing the extension to .GM1). However, instead of loading the game through the multiplayer option, you load the game through the standard game option and select the name of your saved file (for example, CAMP7).

The Nine Maps of the Eight-Map Campaign

Into the breach we go. Here's everything you need to know about the campaign maps—most importantly, how to beat them. The analysis of each campaign starts with the objective of the campaign and ends with its reward, as they actually appear in the game. Most of the screen shots that accompany the maps derive from the actual *Heroes* editor program the designers used to build the maps. Therefore, you will see many objects in these pictures that you will never see in the campaign itself because your enemy will have collected most of them before you get there.



The final battles in many of the campaign maps are extremely difficult. The enemy has well-defended castles and powerful heroes that can prove to be almost unbeatable. Through the proper use of a few certain spells, you can defeat them. Berserk forces the computer's powerful units to attack each other, and Blind and Paralyze can help your range-attack units wipe out enemy forces. If you have dragons or can protect your troops with Anti-Magic, you can use Storms and Armageddons to decimate opposing forces. Barring these spells, a powerful barbarian or knight loaded down with artifacts can simply cut through your opposition.

Campaign One: Gateway

The Goal

"You have established a foothold in the new land. This small island is fiercely contested by three other factions, all vying to capture the strategic town—Gateway. The town is located in the center of the island, and so dominates its surroundings that the other factions will surrender to the lord that captures it. Beware the dragon guardian of Gateway."

Gateway resembles some of the smaller standard game maps. You can ignore the enemy heroes for the most part, because the goal is to take control of the center town (called Gateway), a that feat doesn't take long. This is one of the easiest (if not the easiest) campaign maps. Even if your foes take your home castle, you still have seven days in which to take the center town—and you can do that readily.

Other than the center town and the artifacts on the island, nothing is random with this map. The sorceress always starts in the southwest; the knight starts in the southeast; the warlock starts in the northwest; and the barbarian starts in the northeast. Gargoyles are always the first obstruction keeping you from the center town, and you always encounter a dragon at the town gates that you must defeat.

You notice I said only one dragon guards the town gates. If you click on the dragon, it says "few," implying more than one—but only one dragon is there. So don't waste your time building a superhero. All you need is enough strength to get past the gargoyles and to inflict 200 damage points against the lone dragon in order to kill it.

In other words, you need to get to this town very fast if you want to prevail on this map, because your opponents charge full speed to the town at the same time. After the second week, any one of you should be able to defeat the dragon, and three weeks is the absolute most you need to take the town. Besides, the faster you take the town, the better your final score.

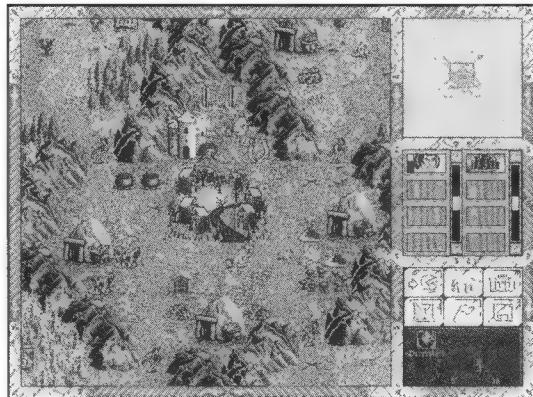


Figure 14-3

The center town in Gateway. You must defeat only one dragon to conquer the town, which is a different type of town each time you play the campaign.



Each warlord starts with an ore mine and wood mill, providing plenty to purchase the first five kinds of troops. Accordingly, these five kinds are more than enough to defeat the dragon. Your starting forces are insufficient to do the job. You need at least the first week to get the required troop strength (the shortest I've seen it done is a week and two days). The trick to getting to the castle first is knowing when you have just enough troops to beat the gargoyles and the dragon. If you waste too much time after that point, an opponent can get the jump on you.

The Reward

"Gateway has fallen! The other lords have abandoned their castles and fled. They have alerted their homelands and now gather their forces. Speed is of the essence."

Campaign Two: The Archipelago

The Goal

"Your way to the mainland is blocked by the Archipelago of the Ancients, a series of four large islands, each held by a different lord. The opposition must all be subdued, and they are better led this time. Boats are a necessity—use them wisely."

This is not an overly difficult map and, because it has the same goal—conquer everyone else—it plays like a standard game map. With four large islands situated around a tiny island with a dragon tower, you get plenty of room to roam about and usually enough time to build up your forces. The key to victory in this scenario is to maintain the sanctity of your home island. Ward off all foreigners, then methodically eat away at the other islands one by one until you gobble them all.

This is a trickier scenario than the first one in the campaign. Each warlord starts with his own island—the sorceress in the north, warlock in the west, knight in the south, and barbarian in the east. All the islands possess not only the basic resources needed to develop dwellings and troops—wood, ore, and gold—but also more than enough mines to develop the highest rated troops. Therefore, this map constitutes an island conquest first and foremost, rather than a battle for resources first and a conquest second. Each warlord comes to power about the same time, and thereafter, it's a question of attack strategy.

Though it might seem essential to build ships on this map (and every warlord has enough wood to build them), they are unnecessary. Since you find stone lith portals on all four islands, you can skip from isle to isle without getting your feet wet if you so desire.

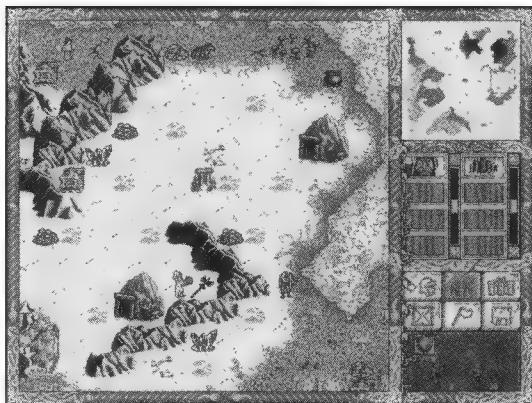


Figure 14-4
Stone lith on the east island.

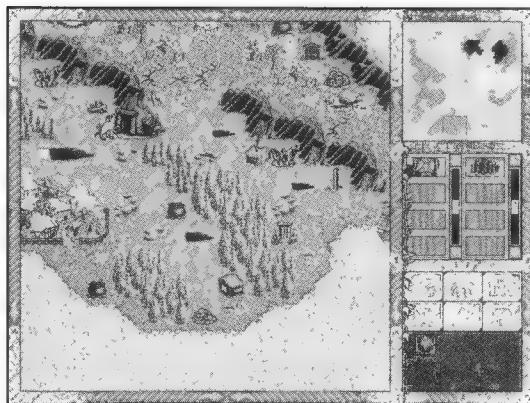


Figure 14-5
Stone lith on the south island.

You may not need ships to travel, but you need to slay the other warlords as fast as possible before they grow too strong. So, ships can prove extremely worthwhile on this map, because they can give you the element of surprise. Unlike stone lith transportation, ships let you attack from different and multiple locations. Portals can be flaky, taking you to the other islands in a random fashion, not directly where you want to go. Such random detours can waste valuable time. Of course, having said that about portals, don't forget the four whirlpools on this map, one in each corner. They can save you time if you don't have a specific island destination to set sail for.

In order to think conquest, however, you must first build up your own island. Each island sports two towns that match the type of the island's castle. Your first goal is to take control of these towns and build them into strong castles. With three castles producing the same kinds of troops, you can become extremely powerful—and ready for warlord battle.

Once you acquire your three castles, choose your first enemy target. If you're not the warlock, take out the warlock first, because, given time, the warlock gains dragons. The computer with dragons is scary. The computer always plays

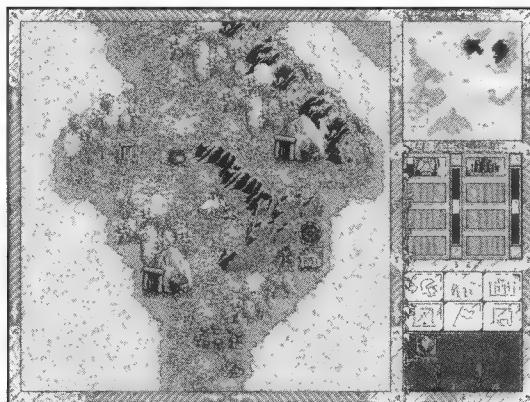


Figure 14-6
Stone lith on the west island.



aggressive and nasty, but with dragons in its forces, it gets downright maniacal—making it very difficult for you to win. This provides all the more reason to hasten your build-up. If you take your sweet time, you know the warlock is happily building dragons—preparing to kill you.

If you're the knight or barbarian warlord, first attack the spellcasters. Their upper-level monsters are the strongest in the game, and they take longer to acquire. Therefore, you might be able to strike them before they become their mightiest. Spellcasters can also become indomitable if you give them the time to build a complete, four-level mage guild.

Despite all the wealth you find on your home island, gold can pose a problem. The reason is that each island features only one gold mine. That's not a problem if you own just one castle. However, as you add castles and spend gold filling them up with troops, your expenditures soon exhaust your income. With three castles, therefore, you might not be able to afford the highest-level troops you want. To avoid that, economize on your troop purchases. Instead of buying only a few phoenixes, for example, which require much time to reproduce, you might be wise to acquire more druids and unicorns, which can give you more bang for your buck.

The Reward

"The Archipelago of the Ancients has been subdued and added to your domain. On the horizon lies a vast, unexplored—and hostile—continent."

Campaign Three: The Wounded Land

The Goal

"Chaos. A maelstrom of combat plagues the land. The people suffer, but will rally behind the wielder of the Eye of Goros, an artifact that can heal the wounded land. It was buried and lost eons ago. The first lord to uncover the Eye will unite the people and conquer the land."

You rarely see a waterless map in this game, but such is the case with The Wounded Land. This is also the largest map in the game, but for all its size, its terrain is remarkably homogenous—mainly dirt and grass with a swatch of desert in the south. Trees blanket the landscape and create narrow maze-like paths through which the competing warlords could travel to battle each other—if that was their goal.

The goal in *The Wounded Land* is to be the first warlord to find the ultimate artifact. Unfortunately, the computer excels at this task. It's so good at it, in fact, that this map can become enormously frustrating. It seems that every time you think you're close to capturing it, the computer zips in ahead of you. This irritating tendency does decrease, however, as you become more familiar with the map.

The four warlords start in the four corners, far from each other. The barbarian starts in the southwest corner, the warlock starts in the northwest corner, the knight starts in the northeast corner, and the sorceress starts in southeast corner. Eight towns perch on an imaginary circle toward the center of the map, but towns are relatively worthless to you on this map. If you're building towns into castles, then you're not out hunting for obelisks that give you the puzzle pieces to the ultimate artifact. Don't be seduced by anything on this map that doesn't bring you closer to the ultimate artifact.

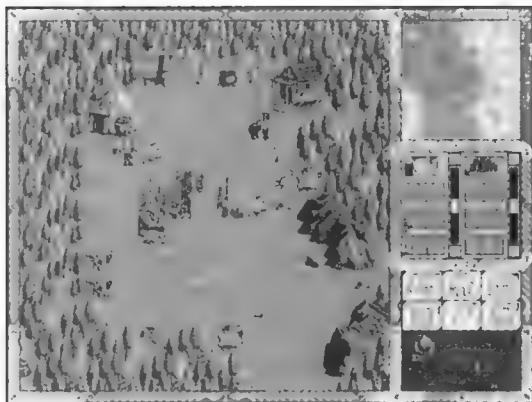


Figure 14-7
The warlock in the northwest.

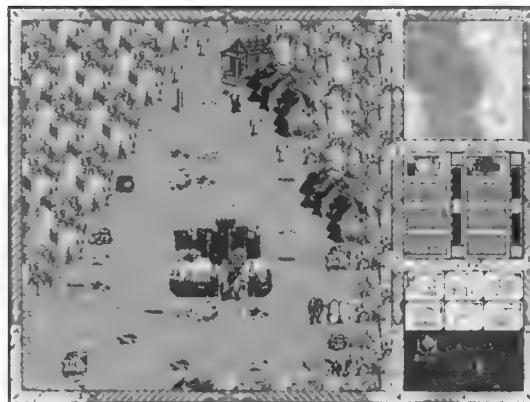


Figure 14-8
The knight in the northeast.



Figure 14-9
The sorceress in the southeast.

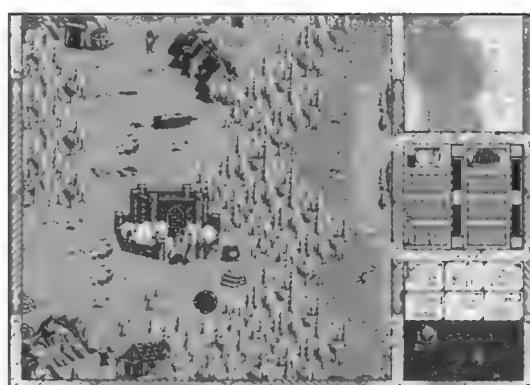


Figure 14-10
The barbarian in the southwest.



There are many obelisks on the map, and you don't need to travel far from your castle to find them. But since so many are available, each one reveals fewer pieces of the puzzle. Instead of eliminating three or four pieces as the obelisks do in most maps, these eliminate only one or two. Further complicating your quest is the monotonous terrain. The trees and mountains look the same wherever you go, thus it becomes difficult to pinpoint a location, unless you have cleared many pieces from the puzzle.

You can find the ultimate artifact incredibly quickly, however, if you know the map well. It is possible to visit one obelisk, remove one piece of the puzzle, and know exactly where you want to go. Then, you can find one or two more obelisks just to make sure. Sometimes, however, you reveal only trees at each obelisk, and it seems to take forever.

For the most part, you need not concern yourself with fighting your opponents. If your holdings are well defended, opposing heroes ignore you. If you're weak, they haunt you. So, don't leave your castle unguarded. Push out from your castle quickly—a warlock scout can be beneficial because of its increased vision—and explore the map thoroughly so you know what places look like. If you don't know the map like the back of your hand, you cannot win with regularity.



This tip belongs in the truly-cheesy, probably unethical category, so pretend you didn't learn it from me. If you want to drastically reduce the elapsed time for completing this map, save the game as soon as you start it, then continue on to find the location of the ultimate artifact. After you find it, go back to the saved game and play it again. You can walk right up to the hiding spot and dig it up. It takes you a week and a half, tops. I told you it was unethical, but it is effective.

The Reward

"The healing power of the Eye of Goros spreads throughout the land. The population unites behind you and the other lords retreat. The war for domination begins."



Campaign Four: Free-For-All

The Goal

"With the founding of a homeland, the other lords now take you seriously. All seek to dominate the central continent, and each is suspicious of the others. The territory is huge, the opposition distant. Resources are scarce and should be fiercely defended. You must be the last lord left to claim victory."

Like campaign three, Free-For-All is a large map (virtually all land, except for a slender border of water) and one of the favorites of the New World testers. The goal is a familiar one: Conquer all and take no prisoners—and do it as fast as you can. This map features a wonderfully varied terrain, including one of every ground cover in the game: water, grass, snow, swamp, lava, desert, and dirt.

The set-up for the warlords appears equal at first glance. The barbarian starts in upper left; the sorceress in upper right; the knight in lower right; and the warlock in lower left. Each owns the nearby mines that they need, although everyone other than the knight must deal with some bad terrain in order to secure them.

A look at the towns, however, shows some inequalities among the starting positions. The map features numerous towns (14) spaced in a very grid-like pattern inside the boundaries of the home castles. Though you find three barbarian towns near the barbarian castle, three sorceress towns near the sorceress castle, and three knight towns near the knight castle, there is only one warlock town near the warlock castle. In fact, only one warlock town exists on the entire map, compared to seven knight castles.

If the knight comes quickly to power, it can readily grab four knight towns, one just to the north on the coastline, and three to the west along a mountain range separating the knight from the warlock. Moreover, a nearby crystal mine gives the knight all the resources he needs to build paladins. On a large map like this, the ability to move out and explore, yet return to castles of the same type to replenish your forces provides a tremendous advantage.

The barbarian, with three towns of the same type nearby and the ability to move quickly across all bad terrain, also holds an advantageous position. It can sweep through the desert south of its home castle, pick up many treasures secreted there, and continue into the warlock's swampy domain.

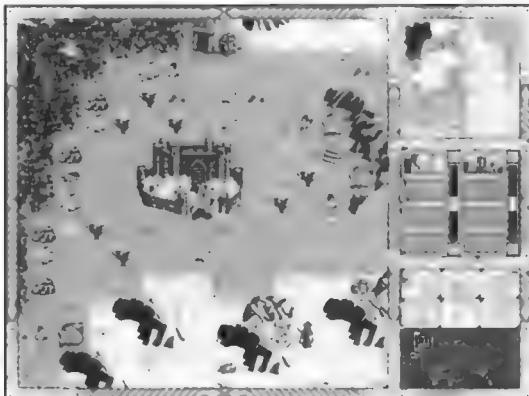


Figure 14-11

The barbarian castle in the northwest corner, near the lava.

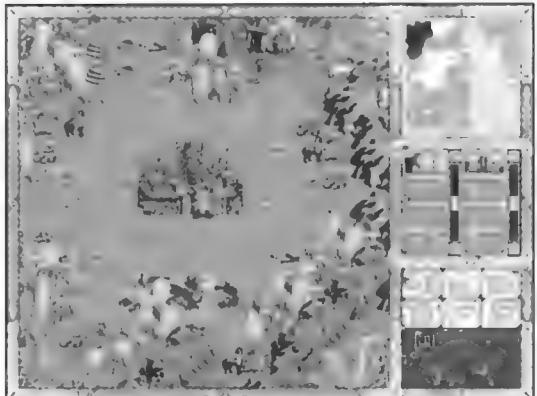


Figure 14-12

The warlock castle in the southwest corner, rimmed by swamp.

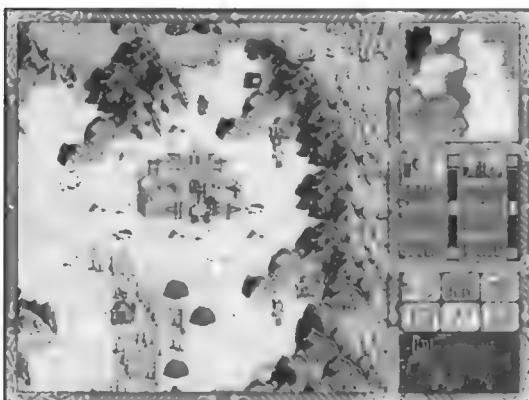


Figure 14-13

The sorceress castle in the northeast corner, chilled by the snow.



Figure 14-14

The knight castle in the southeast corner, surrounded by only grass.

With so many towns, all warlords can grow quickly, and it becomes difficult to kill off your computer opponents. The map turns into a crowded, chaotic place filled with enemy heroes who roam far afield to grab free towns. The land is filled with treasures, as well, so it's fun to explore and gather. However, if your goal is to win quickly—which it is for the overall campaign score—this map is a headache. You'll find it to be one of the longest maps in the game.

Expansion can also give headaches to the over-eager warlord. You can get in big trouble on this map if you expand too rapidly, especially if you're the sorceress. With five towns near the home roost, the temptation to build an empire can be strong. Even if you can take them, you often lack the forces to hold them. It's best to expand slowly, so your gold and troop resources match your holdings. If you leave your castles weak or your towns undeveloped, the computer comes on like the vulture it often is.

It would seem that with so little water on the map, you would have little use for ships—and it's true. You cannot build ships at any home castle, and only a few of the towns are port towns. You'll notice that the computer rarely uses ships—providing a good indicator of their relative worthlessness.

Remember the well-established routine for *Heroes* on this map—control your area, build slowly, then target your weakest adjacent neighbor for expansion—and you do well here. There is no real doubt of victory, but the speed with which you achieve victory is crucial. Unfortunately, this monster allows you no short cuts.

The Reward

"With your victory, the other lords have made their final retreat. They must each in turn be fought one-on-one in their homelands, and their personal castle must be captured."

Campaign Five: Castle Ironfist (the Knight)

The Goal

The twisting Floodwater River divides the land of the Knights, led by Lord Ironfist. He counts on the river to protect him. The only town suitable to boat-building lies along the river far to the east. To defeat Ironfist, you must capture his home castle in the far northwest.

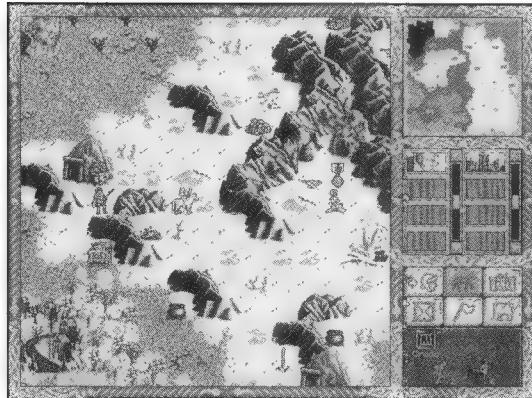


Figure 14-15

The large patch of desert in the west offers genies, nomads, artifacts, and a gold mine for the taking.



Campaign five is the first of the “warlord” scenarios in which your goal is to vanquish the host warlord. In this case, the knight assumes the role of both your host and your target. The knight warlord resides in the castle in the northwest corner of the map, north of the river that snakes across the entire region. You always start in the eastern castle, just south of the river, regardless of whether you are a sorceress, warlock, or barbarian. Since this is knight territory, the other two castles on the north side of the river are knight castles, as well, and all three towns north of the river are knight towns.

If you look more closely at the knight castles, you see just how luxurious these warlords have it. The north castle has two gold mines, a gem mine, a crystal mine, and four artifacts within easy reach—all unguarded. The immediate region around the center castle is similarly endowed with free booty.

The trick of this map, therefore, is to find the way to build a ship so you can sail against Ironfist’s distant dwelling. Here’s how: Three towns lie nearby south of the river, two of which always match your castle type and one that is different. Take at least one of these towns, especially the one behind you, to boost your income and troop production.

After you gather your strength, follow the river west until you reach the stone lith portal at the top of a thumb of land that juts north, just across the river from Ironfist’s stronghold. Along the way, you can collect many mines, artifacts, and treasures that help level the battle field when you finally make it across the river.

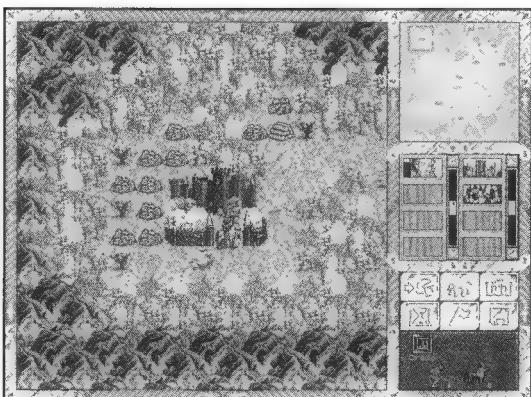


Figure 14-16

Your target. Lord Ironfist dwells in the knight castle in the northwest corner of the map.

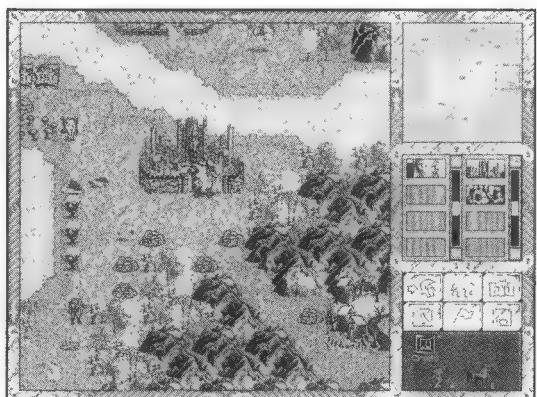


Figure 14-17

Your home. Regardless of which warlord you play, you begin in the castle in the east on the south side of the river.

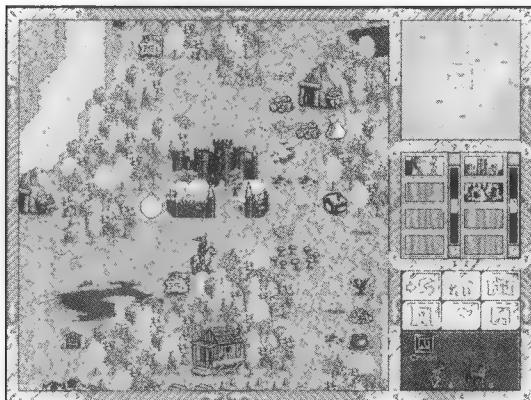


Figure 14-18
A second knight castle sits in a big bend in the river in the center of the map.

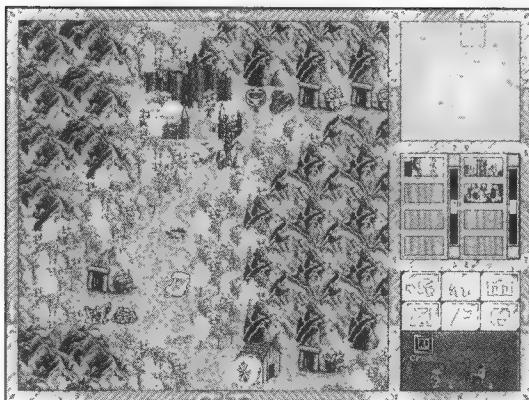


Figure 14-19
The third knight castle lies way to the north.

The stone lith near Lord Ironfist transports you to a stone lith on the north side of the river, just below the center knight castle. You're immediately greeted by paladins, as well as by enemy heroes, so don't make this crossing unless you have plenty of firepower to handle the red-hot action. Your next goal is to conquer the town at the east end of the river, across from your home castle. By the time you get there, you have to work your way past several new castles to reach it. The town may also have become a castle by this point.

Once you reach the eastern town and capture it, build a shipyard and launch a ship that takes you west again, all the way to Lord Ironfist's shore. It obviously takes a long time to reach the castle gates along this land and sea route. So, there is another way. If you collect the necessary resources, you can build a complete mage guild and try to get the Dimension Door spell. With Dimension Door, you can travel to that "thumb" of land across the river from Ironfist and magically transport yourself to his castle. Gathering the necessary resources can be time-consuming, as well, but if you do it efficiently, the magic route to Ironfist can cut your time dramatically.

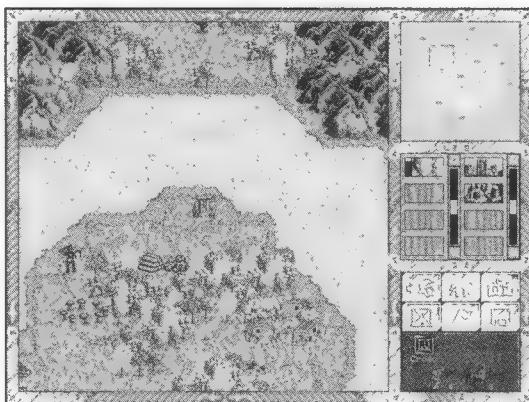
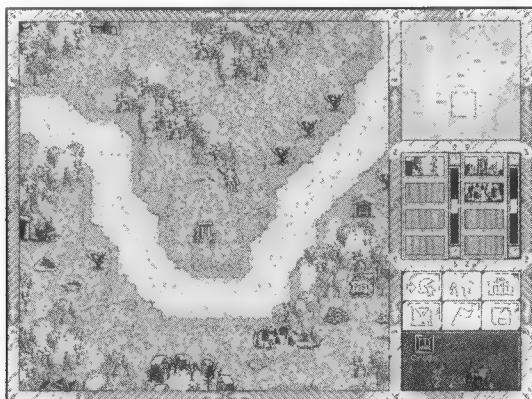
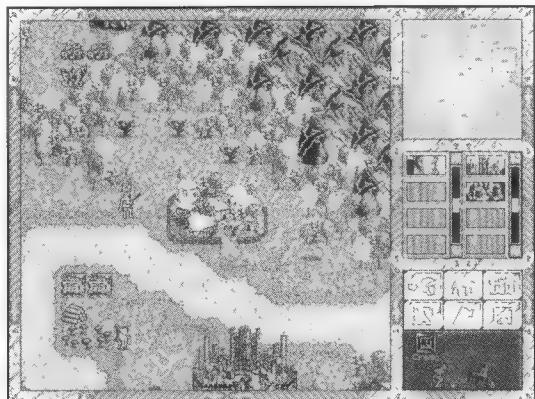


Figure 14-20
The stone lith just across the river from Lord Ironfist's roost.

**Figure 14-21**

The stone lith on the north side of the river.

**Figure 14-22**

Try to reach the riverside town to the east, across from your home castle.



The knight castle in the center of the map is critical on this map. If you can take it and hold it, you can keep the other enemy heroes at bay while you launch the attack on Ironfist. This castle also offers a good troop factory for you, because it is the castle closest to Ironfist. You need plenty of troops to defeat the black knight. This is the place to recruit them.

While you search for Ironfist, of course, the knight troops swarm after you, as well. If you can build ships in the eastern town, so can they—and they will. You must keep strong garrison forces in your castles, while you, at the same time, pursue an offensive strategy. This takes great strength, and great strength takes much time. Unfortunately, the more time you take, the stronger your northern counterparts grow. It takes a long while to win this scenario, and your final battles are against enormously powerful forces. Don't be surprised when you attack a hero and suddenly face 40 paladins.

When you reach the cataclysmic confrontation with Ironfist, don't forget your Berserk spell. It may offer your only saving grace. While you wait for the catapult to knock down the castle walls, a few well-placed Berserk spells cause the other side to kill each other off. At least it can reduce Ironfist's troop numbers to a beatable amount.

One last observation: Only four obelisks exist on this map, all of them located on the north side of the river at the far west side of the map, below Ironfist's



castle. You can reach this strip of land only by ship, but you might find it worthwhile to stop here before you make the final water landing against Ironfist. In addition to the obelisks, the strip contains four artifacts. Who knows? This stopover may give you the boost you need to match Ironfist's might.

The Reward

"The Knights are broken in battle! You have conquered their homeland."

Campaign Six : Castle Slayer (the Barbarian)

The Goal

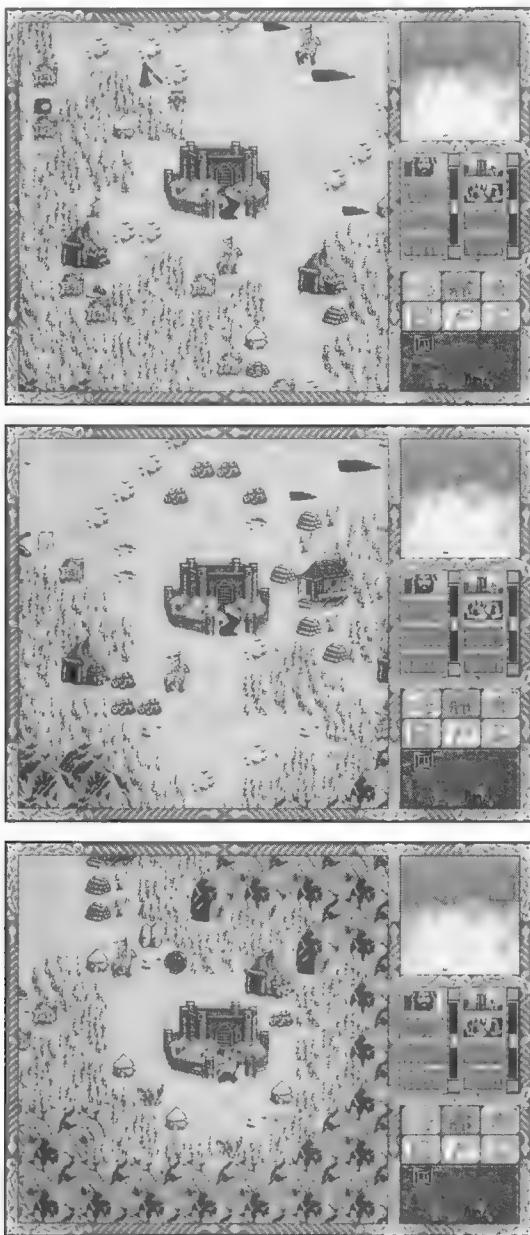
"Far to the north, beyond the Trackless Desert, lies the Frozen Wastes. It is the homeland of Lord Slayer and his barbarian followers. Once the mountain pass has been breached by either side, barbarian raiders will stream south. The desert may harbor unknown allies who can aid you. Slayer's castle lies just north of the pass."

You can't get a scenario more simple and straightforward than this one, which is appropriate for the barbarian Lord Slayer's scenario in the campaign. The barbarian is known for its brawn, not its intellect.

The barbarian is a creature of the Frozen Wastes, as the map intro says, but it has somehow managed to eke out a nice living in the northern tundra. With three barbarian castles, three barbarian towns, a passle of heroes, a slew of artifacts, and all the gold and resources a barbarian could need to generate trolls and cyclops—the north country is definitely the place to be on this map.

Unfortunately, you begin (as either the warlock, sorceress, or knight) far to the south in the grasslands, below the Trackless Desert. You're not nearly as fully equipped as the barbarian hordes above you. However, you're no wastrel either. The grasslands house all the mines and artifacts you need to develop into a first-class fighting force. The only question is whether you have the time to do it. Usually, you don't.

The reason you have little time is that the narrow pass separating you from the north is guarded by a handful of pygmies. These goblins couldn't hold water, much less the hordes from the north that come barreling down in the first weeks. They can storm across the hot sands and wipe you out before you have time to pull on your boots of mobility.



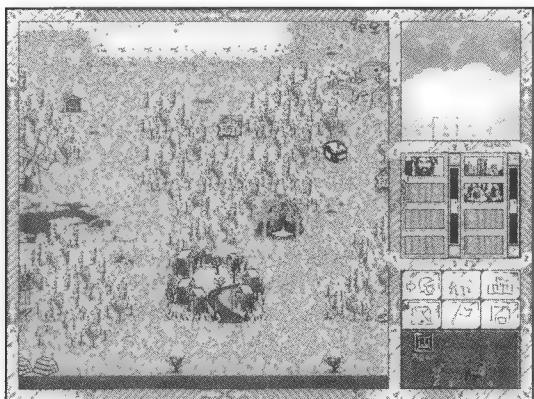
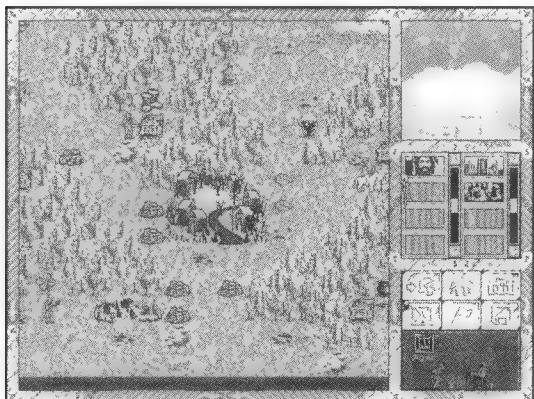
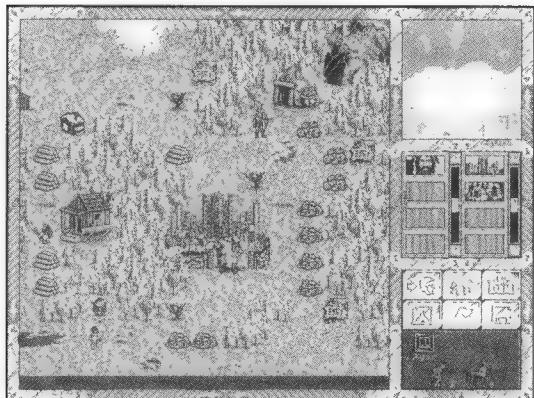
Figures 14-23, 14-24, 14-25

The Frozen Wastes of the barbarian north. The two castles in the northwest are the support castles for Lord Slayer's castle in the east of the map.

The goal seems simple enough. All you do is head north, get through the mountain pass, and take Slayer's castle. It's sitting right there. What's so hard about that? It may seem simple, but it's tough. Players have been heard complaining that it's impossible to beat the barbarian map, they can't do it no matter what they try. Well, it is possible, and the trick is to be overly aggressive, like a barbarian yourself.

You thought I was kidding about the boots of mobility. I wasn't. The first thing you need if you want to transform yourself into a barbarian is the speed of a barbarian. To find these boots, march west from your castle and just to the north of the first town, surrounded by trees. They're always there, and you should always put them on. Now, you can head across the hot sands to grab all the help you can get.

The desert provides the key to this map, because it is here you can quickly boost your troop strength. While you build up a strong hero for a week or two in the grasslands, send a warlock scout with its increased vision to open up the desert for you. Then, when you're strong enough, charge across the sand with your best hero. Your targets? The mines, artifacts, genie lamps, and desert tents on the west and east sides of the desert. Some guardian troops join you without a struggle, if you're lucky.



Figures 14-26, 14-27, 14-28

The southern grasslands you call home feature a castle, two towns, and plenty of resources to build up your forces.

Gold plays a very important role with this map, so make sure to grab and hold onto the gold mines. If you work quickly, you can become very strong, very fast, and you can race up through the mountain pass to Slayer's castle. Don't bother with the enemy heroes if you can help it. Since you are typically stronger than they are, they tend to back off when you approach, especially if they hold artifacts, which they usually do. Use their wariness to keep the enemy away from your holdings.

When you finally reach Slayer's castle, you face a battle of mammoth proportions, of course. The barbarian may have 80 cyclops waiting for you when you arrive, but when you knock on its door and cast a Berserk spell on the cyclops, you can watch the one-eyed monster wipe out just about everything in the castle. The castle is so crammed with troops, the cyclops can't move, and it butchers everyone for you. So, if you can stockpile five or six Berserk spells in your book of magic, you can transform a losing cause into an immediate success.

The Reward

"The barbarian castle has been overthrown and their army scattered!"



Campaign Seven: Castle Lamanda (the Sorceress)

The Goal

"Warned of your approach, the sorceress Queen Lamanda worked a dreadful magic and sank the approach to the only port. You must find the teleport gate to assault the southwestern land and capture the port. From there you must struggle through the forest maze to locate her castle in the extreme northwest."

Not knowing exactly where to go on this map and what to do can make your journey extremely time consuming and difficult. As with the hunt for Castle Ironfist, finding Castle Lamanda requires some puzzle solving and long-distance trekking.

You (as either the knight, warlock, or barbarian) begin the scenario on the southeast island with a castle and two towns close at hand. With two wood mills, you own plenty of material to build ships. With two ore mines, an alchemist's lab, a gold mine, and some lightly guarded artifacts, you have enough to build troops of good, if not absolute, strength. The bottom line on this island is, it's a good place to start, but you must soon get off it to find the queen.

The sinister queen resides in the opposite, northwest corner of the map, virtually surrounded by a moat. The path to her door, overrun by trees, resembles more of a maze than a path and adds to your confusion. Is she well fortified with ample support troops? Of course. She starts with everything she needs and plenty of troops, and just builds more and more power as you make your slow way to her. To the south stands another sorceress castle, immersed in artifacts and resources. A third castle keeps watch on the east side with many heroes, artifacts, and mines, as well. Suffice to say that when you reach the northern land mass, you'd better put forth a force to contend with, or you'll be defeated.

With water all around you and two wood mills on your island, the knee-jerk expectation is that you need to build a ship to move off your island. Not so. After you subdue your

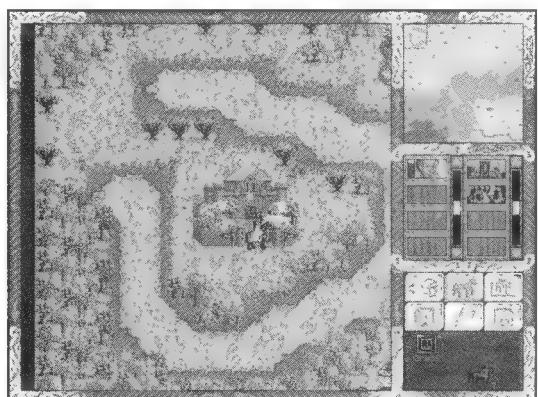


Figure 14-29

The sorceress castle lies in the northwest corner of the map.

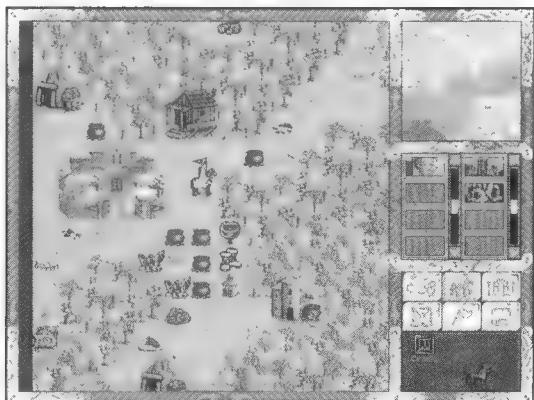


Figure 14-30

Another well-fortified castle stands south of the queen.



Figure 14-31

In the east, a third sorceress castle rises out of the forest.

homeland and grow sufficiently strong, enter the stone lith portal on the northeast corner of the island. It teleports you to the dirt-encrusted island in the southwest corner of the map, where you find a town that you must build into a castle with a shipyard.

After you get your ship (and sack the island for its wealth), set sail to the north land mass. You find only one opening in the trees on the queen's coastline that lets you land. Of course, you should expect heavy opposition from the sorceress minions as soon as you do. Her troops are enormously powerful.

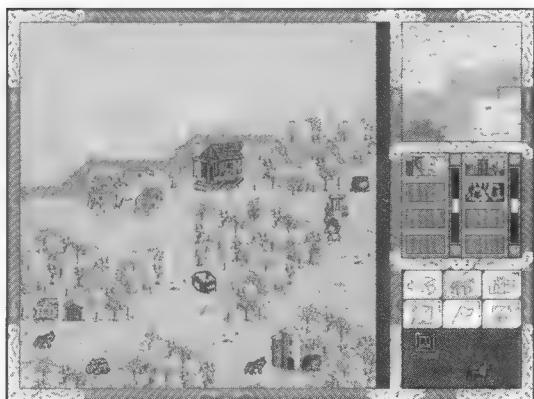


Figure 14-32

The stone lith on your home island.

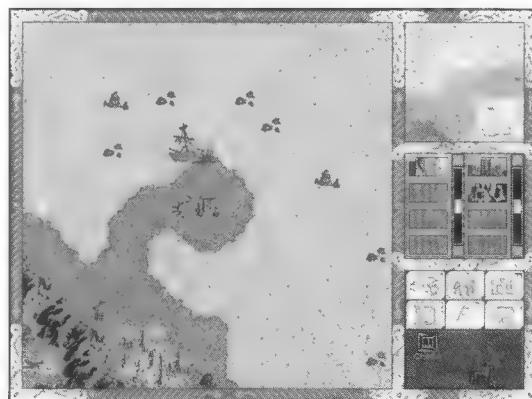
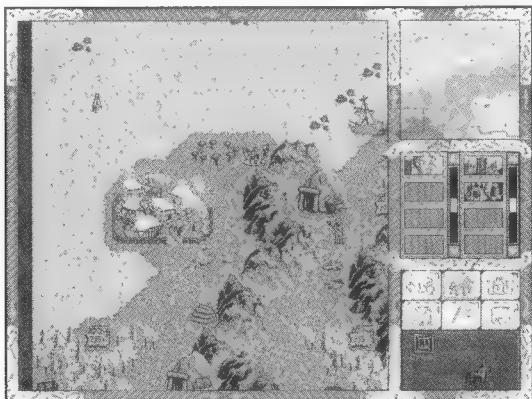


Figure 14-33

The stone lith on the eastern side of the southwest island.

**Figure 14-34**

The western side of the southwest island.

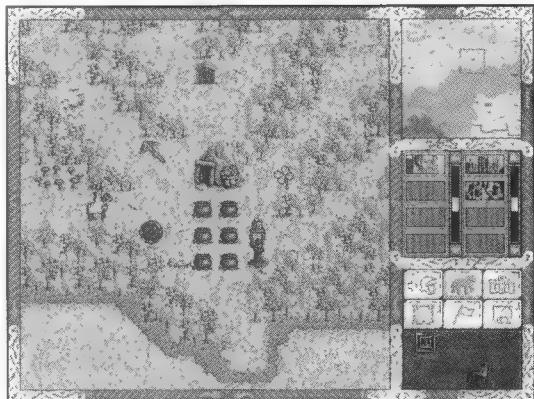
Reaching the queen's shore is only the first part of the puzzle. Then, you must navigate the maze through the trees to her castle, battling strong forces all the way. From your beach head, turn east at the second opportunity and follow the twisting path all the way to the queen's eastern castle. If your strategy consists of using the queen's own forces for the final battle, then conquer this castle. If you want to use your own forces, speed past the castle to the north, pillaging what you can.

It bears repeating: The enemy heroes you confront on this trek are programmed for great strength from the very start of the scenario. If you don't use the sorceress' troops for resupply (a good strategy), then you must continually replenish your troops by sailing heroes into position from your home castles.

Fortunately, sorceress' heroes can't get to your castle, because they can't build ships. Therefore, you should not worry about defeat so much as building up enough strength to take the battle to the queen. The distance you must travel to reach her and the logistical problems you face in keeping your main hero or heroes strong makes this a long, drawn-out battle. Although you start with everything you need, the sorceress always starts with more.

The Reward

"You have burst through the forest maze and destroyed Lamanda's castle."

**Figure 14-35**

The opening to the north. By the time you land here, these riches have been plucked clean by sorceress forces.

Campaign Eight: Castle Alamar (the Warlock)

The Goal

"The warlock's castle lies shrouded in the smoky volcanic rift. To reach Lord Alamar's home castle in the extreme southeast, you must wander through the Minotaur Maze. The warlocks are over-confident and not expecting an attack, so sure are they that none can navigate the maze. Gargoyles have been set aside to dissuade invaders from the true path."

The New World designers saved the toughest campaign map for the warlord, which is only fitting, since the dragon, the warlord's mighty warrior, is the toughest troop in the game. Let me set the scene for this dramatically unfair fight.

You begin (as either sorceress, knight, or barbarian) on a verdant strip of grass in the northwest corner of the map with a castle and two towns. A scan of your coastal property reveals you have everything you require to build up even your most powerful troops. So, you should.

Indeed you could live a rich existence here in the grasslands if your goal was not to find your way through a mountainous maze filled with high-powered hydras and gargoyles. Eventually, you gain three castles and absolute security here,

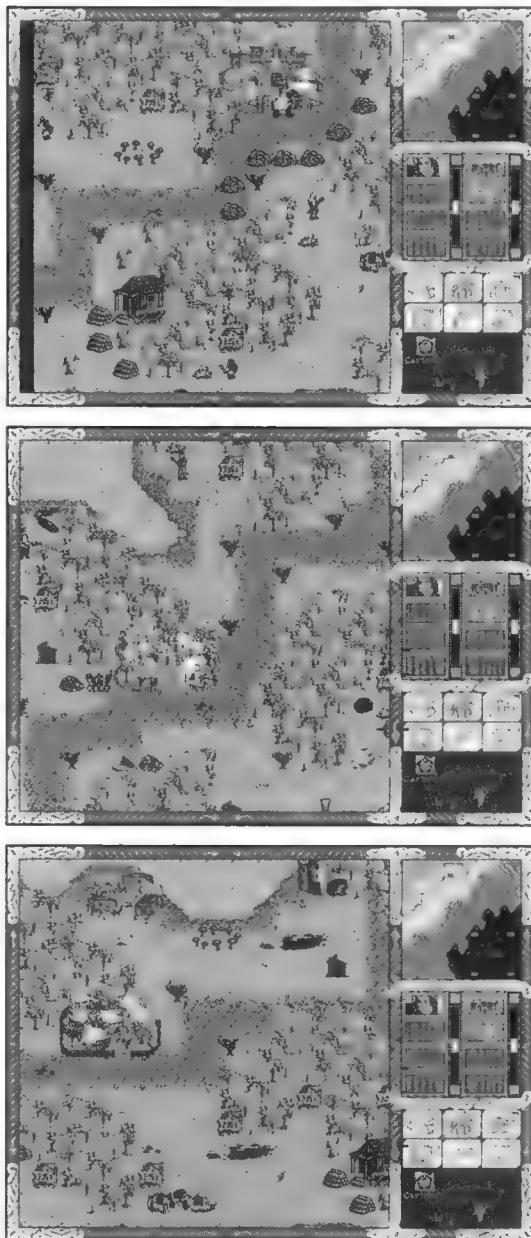


Figure 14-36, 14-37 and 14-38

Your lovely ocean-view property filled with troop-building treasures.



because the warlock does not come through the maze to get you. If you want the game to end, you must enter the maze to go after the warlock, whose domain is located in the southeast corner of the map, in the red-hot lava beds.

As with the previous warlord battles, the warlock stockpiles enormous forces before your arrival. When you finally reach the dark denizen of the volcanic netherlands, don't be surprised to see troops, such as 200 minotaurs and 30 dragons. The warlock starts with all high-end troops, and the warlock's high-end troops are the best in the business. You're in for a legendary tussle --but you can do a few things prepare.

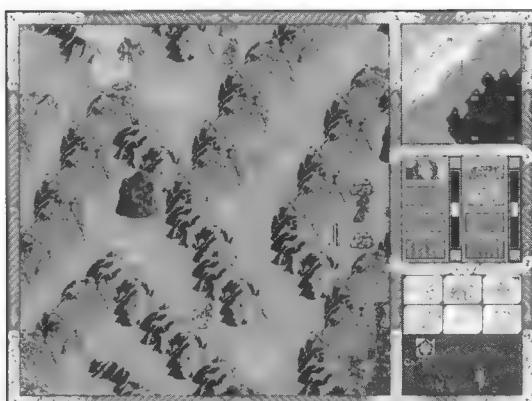


Figure 14-39

The mountainous Minotaur's Maze lies between you in the northwest and the warlock in the southeast.

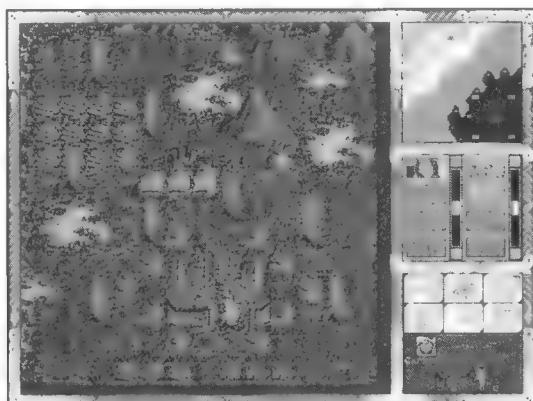
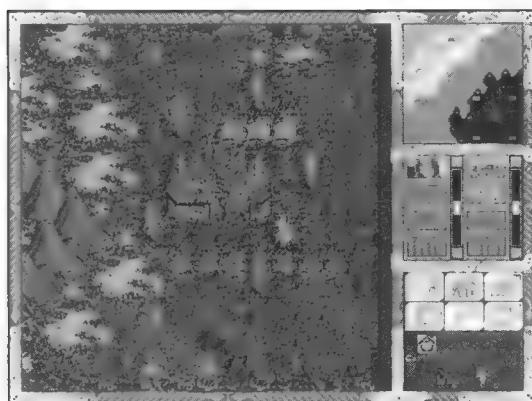


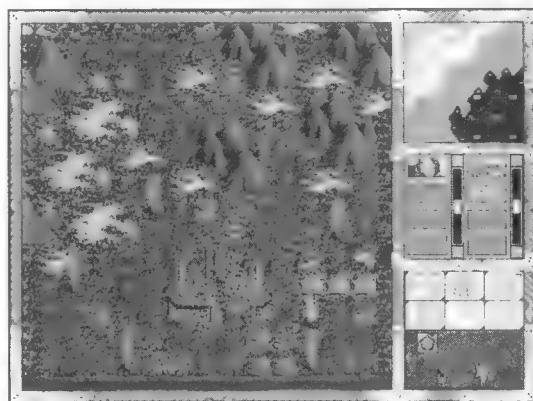
Figure 14-40

The warlock's smoky lair, buried deep in lava country.



Figures 14-41 and 14-42

Aerial views of the warlock's domain, northeast and southwest.



First, explore all your green, grassy region before you enter the maze and build up all of your castles. Second, don't leave home without the spells Berserk and Dimension Door; the more the better. Third, when you send a hero into the maze, make sure it is the nastiest, most powerful hero you can create. Fourth, unless you have a barbarian hero, you need a movement boost to speed your way through the swampy maze and the warlock's lava.



Barbarian heroes trek well through the swamp, of course. Sorceress heroes are capable of remembering lots of spells (Dimension Door, Turn Undead, Berserk). So for this journey, create a powerful, integrated band of heroes. The barbarian and sorceress can work well in the maze. The sorceress (with Berserk spells) can soften up the dragons. Strong knights and barbarians can wade in for the final onslaught.

Into the maze you go. The dragons can wait for a moment. You must first fill your pockets with gold. You find two gold mines along the western edge of the maze, one to the north of the entrance and one to the south.

Once in the maze, you can also easily find the ultimate artifact, and indeed, you should do so. There are no obelisks in the grassland or lava, only in the maze, and each is guarded by 99 ghosts (four groups of 20 and one of 19). They can cause you endless grief unless you bring some Turn Undead spells with you. With them, you kill a group of ghosts with a wave of your magic wand.

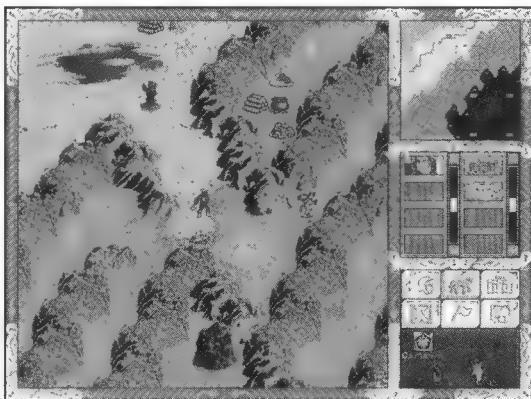


Figure 14-43
The entrance to the Minotaur's Maze. You don't walk far to reach it.

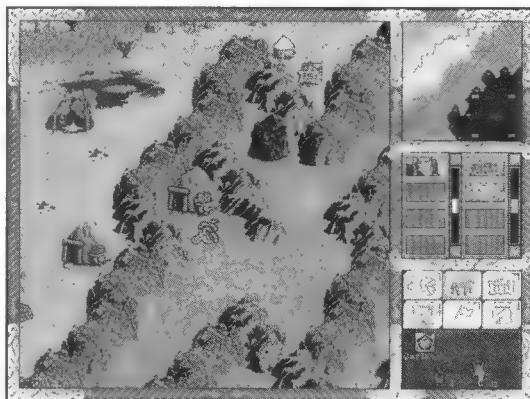


Figure 14-44
Head north from the entrance to find this gold mine—and these hydras.



With the ultimate artifact in hand and increasing experience points from maze battles, perhaps it's time to cut through to the warlock castle. There's a trick that saves you much time and fighting. From the southern gold mine in the maze, make your way to the southeast corner of the maze, near some ghosts and another obelisk. It seems like a dead end. Of course, since you have Dimension Door spells, the mountains pose no obstacle for you. Transport your troops over the mountains, into the lava, and onto the doorstep of the first warlock castle—and wipe it out.

Now you're at least in the neighborhood—if not actually ready—for the final battle against the warlock. The tried and true Berserk method of self-destruction, of course, doesn't work against the dragons, who are immune to magic. However, it does eliminate hydras and minotaurs, so use it lavishly. For your final slugfest with the dragons, your only hope is attrition.

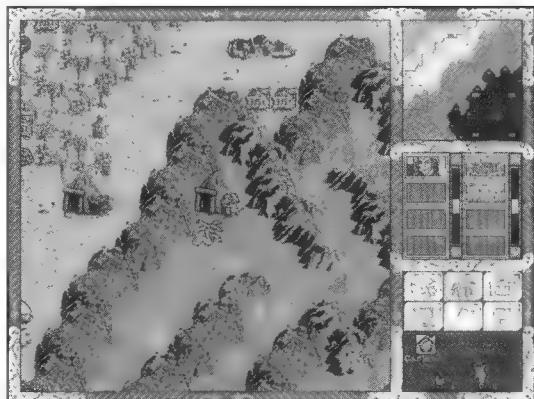


Figure 14-45

Turn south from the entrance, hugging the western wall of the mountains, and you come to this gold mine—and more hydras.

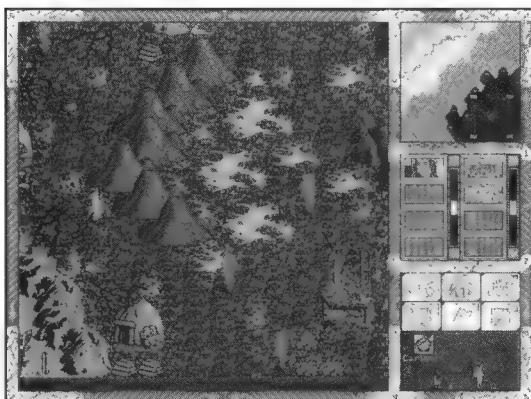


Figure 14-46

Use Dimension Door to skirt the mountains blocking you from the warlock's first castle.

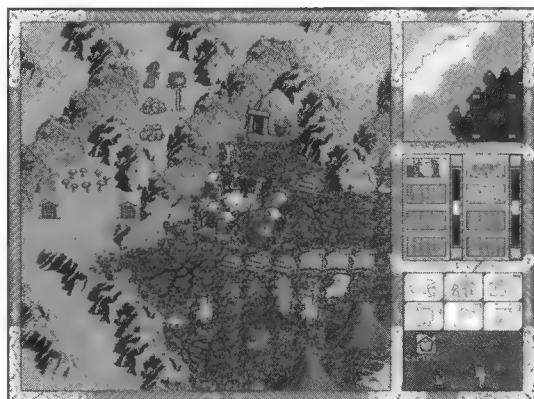


Figure 14-47

Without Dimension Door, you exit the maze near the center of the map and face a gauntlet of warlock castles and heroes.



The Reward

"You have followed the gargoyles to the castle of Lord Alamar and have shattered the might of the warlocks."

Campaign Nine: King-Of-The-Hill

The Goal

Final victory lies within your grasp—but the defeated warlords pool their last resources and band together against you. If you can bend the dragons to your will and force them to side with you, all the other warlords submit, and you conquer rule of the land. Capture the Dragon Citadel on the central island, and victory is yours!

Your goal—a dragon tower—sits placidly on a dirty, mountainous island in the middle of a lake, guarded by four squadrons of griffins. It might not seem like a burdensome task to take this tower, but unfortunately, it's king of the hill on this map, and you're the reigning king. You have miles to go before you can sleep in this dragon's lair.

Depending upon your hero type, you start in one of the four corners of the map. The sorceress castle is located in the southwest corner; the warlock castle is in the southeast corner; the barbarian castle is in the northwest corner in the desert; and the knight castle stands in the northeast corner. With all these corners, let's clarify what king of the hill means on this map. It does not mean your opponents target the dragon tower and, while targeting the tower, they go after you, as well. It means they focus entirely upon you. They don't like your existence. They want to make it as short as possible. And they come at you with great speed and aggression.

It sounds so simple: just take the dragon tower. You need not defeat all of these opponents, but it's a tough balancing act. You must be strong enough to defeat manifold griffins and dragons at the tower, but you must also maintain enough castle strength to keep your opponents from eating you alive. Thus, it takes much time and patience to build a force with enough power to finish the tower job. In the meantime, your opponents grow nasty.

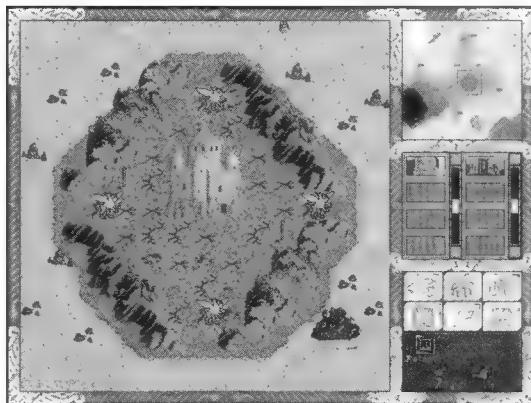
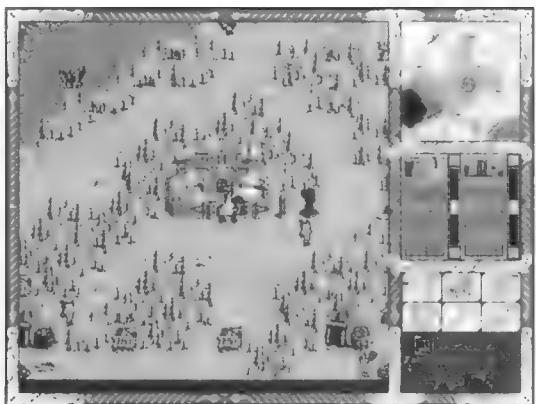


Figure 14-48

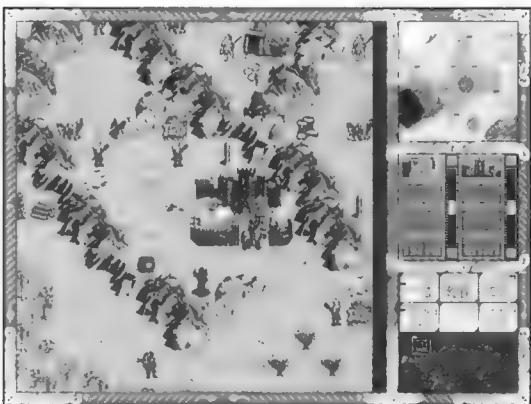
Your goal. The dragon tower on the center island, watched over by griffins.

**Figure 14-49**

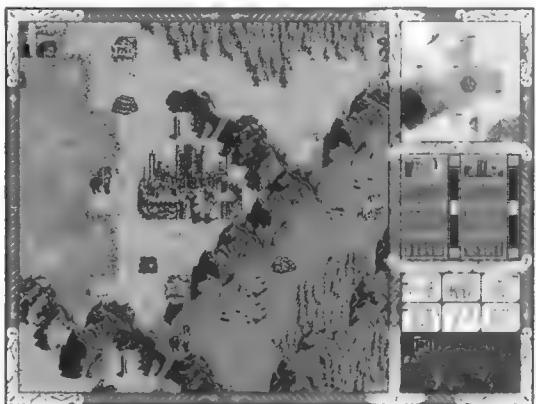
The barbarian's northwestern castle.

**Figure 14-50**

The sorceress' southwestern castle.

**Figure 14-51**

The knight's northeastern castle.

**Figure 14-52**

The warlock's southeastern castle.

If you're in the south (the sorceress or the warlock), your trick is to build up enough power to take the lakeside town (always a knight town) just to the north of you. With that town, you can build a castle with a shipyard, enabling you to acquire a ship. It's best to vanquish your spellcasting neighbor either before or after you take the town. That way, you both boost your strength and increase your security. As soon as you get the boat, however, head for the tower. Don't even think about attacking the two northern warlords that remain. You don't want to fight them. You don't even want to think about them.

Let me add a few words of prediction about these southern spellcasting positions. The warlock castle is the worst of the two, because the knight comes

straight south gunning for you. The knight is gutsy, and the sorceress, although less virulent, can torment you. Between them, they can squeeze you like a bug.

The sorceress has it better. The barbarian starts much farther to the north than the knight does. So, with such a long way to travel, it doesn't usually bother you, contenting itself with gathering the many treasures in its region. Therefore, the sorceress must battle only the warlock (the knight trickles down, but far from her sphere of concern) and can easily dispatch the mage. The sorceress should care only about taking the center town and running to the dragon tower.

If you're either the knight or the barbarian in the north, you can ignore each other for the most part, because so many obstacles lie between you. The strategy remains the same for both. Take the lakeside town nearest to you to buttress your power and security, build a ship, then hightail it to the dragon tower. When you get there, bring your power because 20 dragons lurk inside—five groups of four—not to mention five score of griffins, guarding the pathways to the tower.

A superb tactic on this map is to find the ultimate artifact, even if it slows you down a bit to do it. It doesn't matter what kind of artifact it is. If it is an artifact that inflates your spells powers, you win. If it expands your attack or defense powers, you win. Coming to the dragon tower with high spell power or knowledge, you can run through the griffins with little difficulty. Then, you can use protection spells upon your own hero to reduce the amount of damage the dragons inflict upon you. Approaching the tower with high attack or defense skills, you can mow through griffins and the dragons with just your might, no magic. Even with the ultimate artifact, however, this final battle is no picnic. It takes time and troops to make it to the tower safely, so you must accumulate quite a force in order to prevail during the final confrontation with the fire-breathers.

The Reward

*"The dragons join your cause and the competing warlords capitulate.
You now rule a vast and united land as the one true King!"*

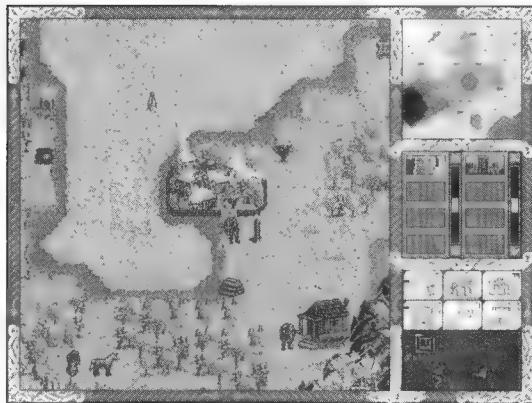


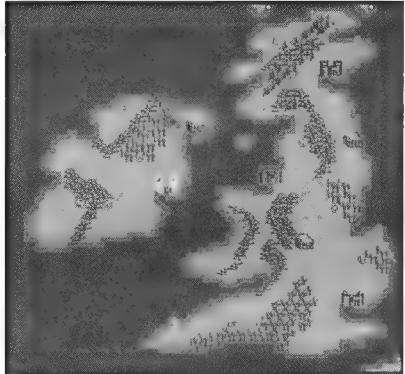
Figure 14-53

This knight town on the lake proves the object of both the sorceress' and warlock's desire.

Chapter Fifteen



The Windows® 95 Scenarios



Hail Britannia

Size: Small

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

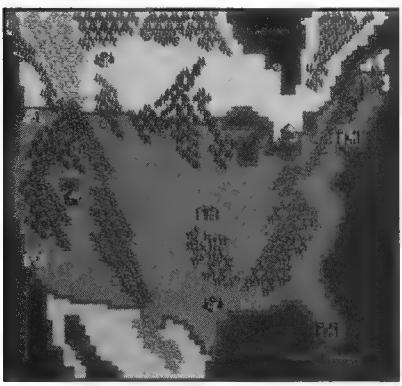
Short Description: Rule the waves to rule Britannia!

Long Description: This map is modeled to look like Great Britain and Ireland. Three castles are on the main body of Great Britain, and one is on Ireland. All castles can build ships, and a travel gate also links the two main islands. The map is all grass and relatively wide open, with several routes between each of the castles. There are few treasures, and the computer players will attack very quickly, hence the tough rating.

Strategy: The best starting castle is the one in Ireland (on the site of modern day Dublin). As the only castle in Ireland, you will have more time to build up before the computer finds you. If you start on Great Britain, you will have to be ready to face an onslaught early, probably by the second week. Scoop up all the nearby treasure, but try to leave the monsters blocking the passes in place. They will slow the computer down a bit. The worst starting castle is Liverpool, with enemies North and South of you. It's better to start in Edinburgh or London, with enemies only coming from one direction.



Try to build a shipyard fairly early. Not only will you be better able to move around the long coastlines, but you will get a chance to pick up a few treasures on outlying land masses. In the southeast, the northern coast of France has a couple of unguarded treasure chests and an artifact guarded by a dragon. In the North a couple of small islands have guarded artifacts. Also, a ship lets you freely raid Ireland or the mainland, without having to fight your way to the travel gate.



GringoLand

Size: Large

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: A strangely familiar land.

Long Description: This map models the United States, northern Mexico, and southern Canada. The U.S. is all grass, Canada all snow, and Mexico all desert. (Yeah, stereotypical, but hey, the game was created in the U.S.) The four starting castles are located at the sites of real-life Los Angeles, St. Louis, New York, and Miami, separated by the Rockies and the Appalachian Mountains.

Strategy: The central part of this map is very wide open. Once the initial buffer monsters are cleared out, heroes will storm back-and-forth across the center. Therefore, try to avoid starting in St. Louis. Also, don't play this map as King-of-the-Hill unless you're a glutton for punishment.

With so much open land, boats aren't a necessity, although you can pick up a few bonus goodies on the island of Cuba, south of Florida.

Barbarians can be very effective on this map because all of Canada and Mexico are hostile terrain, best for Barbarians. Mexico has no towns but enough goodies to justify a side trip. Canada has several mines and two towns and may be worth a more substantial expedition.

If you start out in Los Angeles, be sure to send a strong hero north to conquer Seattle. Once conquered, this town is well-situated and no heroes can reach it by land without passing near your main castle (and presumed defensive stronghold) of Los Angeles.

Miami has the most to gain by building a shipyard, with Cuba nearby and a position astride the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, allowing flexible sea



movement. On land, you can be attacked from two directions, along the Atlantic or Gulf coast, so try to send one strong hero in each direction.

New York has the entire northeast to itself, and should focus on exploiting that area without having to deal with any other computer heroes early on.

St. Louis, in the wide-open midwest, is the most vulnerable castle, but also has a lot of opportunity, with easy access to treasures in all directions. Garrison your castle heavily, and send two heroes out exploring to pick up the easy treasures.



Safe Corners

Size: Normal

Difficulty: Medium

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: No boats . . . how will you get around?

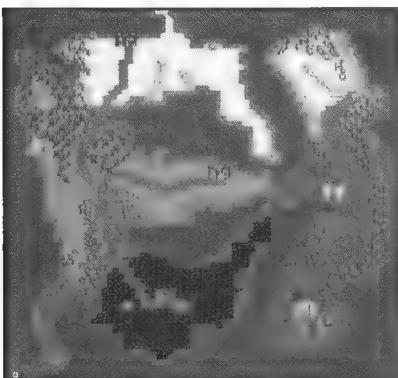
Long Description: Four land masses, one each of grass, dirt, swamp, and lava, are in each of the corners of the map, with a starting castle

and one extra town on each. There is no town positioned to allow a shipyard, and the only means of traveling between the land masses is via the guarded travel gate on each land mass. The mines are coordinated with the castles, so that by and large, the special resources you need are available at nearby mines, and it is very likely that the sixth-level buildings in each castle will be built, probably by the second or third week.

Strategy: This map offers each starting castle all it needs near home, but there are significant rewards to be found (artifacts and chests) by venturing abroad. Focus your first week on building up your castle and picking up nearby goodies. With the new creatures from the second week (or the third week if you get a slow start), you should be able to clear out the monsters guarding the travel gates. Send one hero through the travel gate to pick up stuff in the other lands. If you're fast enough, you will beat the computer heroes to the punch and be able to scoop up a lot of loot. Keep building up your primary hero while you max out your home castle. Sometime early in the second month, send your strong hero home to refresh spells and pick up new monsters. Now it's time to start sacking enemy castles. You may have to make multiple trips home for reinforcements, but this map should be winnable in under two months.



This map offers the opportunity to exploit a little known feature of travel gates. When you enter a travel gate, the computer randomly picks one of the other gates to send you to, but *it will not send you to another gate that has a hero standing in it*. Since the travel gates are the only way to travel between lands, you can use a weak hero to seal off your land from enemy attack. Just send him into the travel gate, and he will teleport away from your land. Keep sending him into the gate until he returns to your homeland, then leave him.



Civil War

Size: Medium

Difficulty: Tough

Human Players Allowed: One to Three

Short Description: Three brothers fight for their father's kingdom, and an old rival takes advantage.

Long Description: There are two major islands on this map. The western island is the

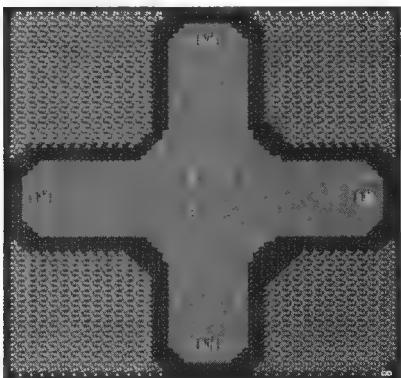
largest, shared by three castles (the three brothers). It's relatively sparse on mines, and has only one neutral town. The smaller eastern island has one castle and two towns (controlled by the old enemy, which will always be a computer player). It also has plenty of mines and treasures, giving this computer player a distinct advantage, and earning the tough difficulty rating for the scenario.

Strategy: To win this map, you must first dominate the other two players on the starting island, then prepare for the inevitable onslaught from the old rival. With relatively few mines and towns on the main island, you won't want to share for long, so you'll have to knock out the other castles fairly quickly. Don't worry about your mage guild early on; you need troops more than magic, and when you conquer the other castles, you'll probably find a mage guild already built up for you.

As a single human, you'll always start off as a knight on the central peninsula. Focus your attention first on the warlock on the southern peninsula. Warlocks are weaker before they have built up their castle, and you won't want to face a warlock later when he has built dragons. Take out the barbarian second. You'll probably be interrupted by attacks from the sorceress on the eastern island. The first one or two attacks will probably be somewhat weaker, coming in the second week. But be prepared for strong attacks by week four or five.

This map has a hidden treasure cache in the woods in the northwest, but you can only get there via the travel gate in the extreme southwest. Don't bother with this until you have a strong hero, since it is well-guarded. However, don't wait too long, or the computer heroes will find it and get tough very quickly.

Eventually you will need to take out the sorceress on the eastern island. You could build a boat at the town on the western shore of the main island, but that may be unnecessary because there will probably be several spare boats on your island left over from failed sorceress invasions. Use one of these to head directly east, taking out the main sorceress castle. Once this castle falls, the others (in the north and south on this island) will be weak and very vulnerable.



The Arena

Size: Small

Difficulty: Normal

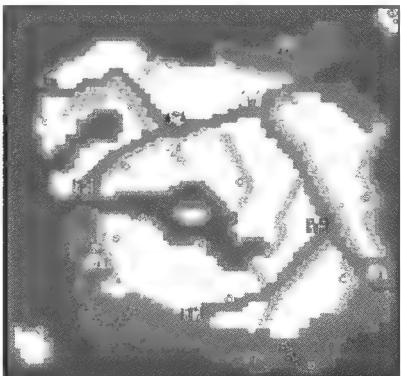
Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: Four Warlocks duel in a specially constructed arena of magic.

Long Description: This map has a very tight, unnatural feel to it. This is intentional, since it is an arena designed only for fighting. It is a symmetrical plus sign, with a castle at the end of each point. The arena is wide open, with few monsters or objects obstructing the warlocks from going after each other. If you want to play a scenario that gets into a lot of fighting quickly with little build-up, this is the one.

Strategy: There is little glitz to this scenario, just the prospect of an immediate struggle with the other warlocks. Don't play it at King-of-the-Hill, or they will all make a beeline straight at you. Try to grab as many resources as possible very quickly. While there are mines on this map, they are difficult to hold, with no natural defenses or obstructions. Build at least a level-one mage guild, but you may not have the resources to build it higher.

There is one very important secret to this map. In the middle of the map is a dragon city. Hidden immediately behind the dragon city, and not visible in any way, is a travel gate. This travel gate links to a small alcove in a corner that is otherwise inaccessible. The alcove has two artifacts and some treasure, with no guards. The only downside is that you must defeat some medium strength monsters to get to the dragon city. Do this as soon as possible. If the computer beats you to it, this scenario may be unwinnable.



Arabian Nights

Size: Medium

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: The desert holds great wealth for those who can brave it. Follow the bedouin trails.

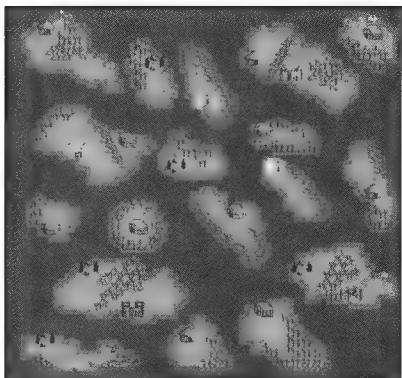
Long Description: This large, round island consists almost entirely of desert, crisscrossed

by a few narrow dirt trails. There is also a small span of dirt at the northeast and along the southern coast. A narrow channel enters the island on the east, but a pair of travel gates just north and south of the channel allows easy land travel over this obstacle. There are relatively few mines, and little natural defense against computer attack after a thin layer of buffer monsters is breached, hence the tough rating.

Strategy: Try to play this scenario as a barbarian, or start with a knight castle and build a barbarian early. Barbarians can move across the desert much easier than other hero types, and moving across the desert is key to this scenario. Most of the treasures and mines are found in the desert, and a non-barbarian with slow troops might only be able to move three or four spaces per turn.

All resources are in short supply in this scenario, so it will be difficult to build up your castle. However, there are plenty of nomad tents and genie lamps. The nomad tents require no special resources and the genies require only gems, so you can build a reasonably strong army without ever building up your castle. Also, nomads and genies are fast, and when paired with a barbarian hero, will allow you much greater range over the desert than the computer player. Focus especially on picking up gems early, so you can buy the genies. Also remember that the genie lamps will be consumed fairly quickly, so hustle up.

If you manage to build up a force of genies and nomads fairly quickly, you might be able to score a quick victory. Genies can fly over castle walls and devastate the defending garrisons. If you don't build a strong enough force early, be prepared for a long, slow war, as the resource shortage forces you to spend far longer than usual building up your castle.



Sea Breeze

Size: Medium

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: A favorite vacation resort for all the fashionable ogres and trolls.

Long Description: This map is perfect for those who love sea battles. Eighteen islands, each with at least one town, make for quite a bit

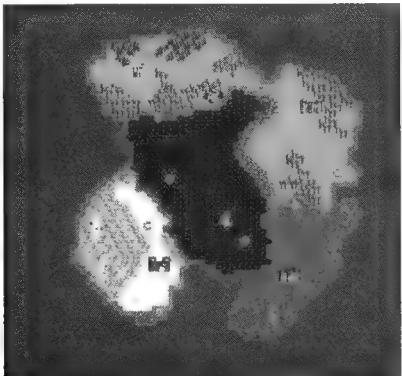
of sailing. Each player starts on a slightly larger island, with the starting castle and one other town. All other islands have one town, a mine or two, and some treasures. All islands are grass only, and because they are so small, a hero can generally traverse any island in one turn. About half of the islands are linked by travel gates, including two that can be reached only by travel gate—their coasts are completely blocked off by trees. The starting islands do not have travel gates, so you will have to build a boat and get to another island before you can begin using that network.

Strategy: This scenario is a classic builder/explorer. The large number of islands each hold plenty of treasures and mines, encouraging exploration. The sea acts as a defensive buffer, giving you plenty of time to put those mines to work, building your castle up to maximum strength.

Although this scenario requires plenty of sea travel, the easiest way to explore initially is using the travel gates. Build a shipyard and a boat as quickly as possible, then sail to an island with a travel gate on it. By using the travel gates, you avoid the extra two turns to board and exit a boat. Eventually, the treasure within easy reach of the travel gates will be exhausted, and you can use boats to explore the rest of the islands.

This scenario can be played with any type of castle. Because of the large number of resources and mines, you can probably build a sorceress or warlock castle all the way up, and if you haven't had a chance to use phoenixes or dragons yet, this may be your chance. As heroes, sorceresses are very nice here because of their double movement at sea.

Try to build up your mage guilds to their maximum, and be prepared to face enemy heroes loaded with high-level spells. Dimension Door can be a particularly effective spell in this scenario, allowing you to island hop across the map in one or two turns.



Atlantis

Size: Small

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: A thriving continent. But why is that volcano rumbling . . . and what's this about a secret?

Long Description: The lost island of Atlantis, shortly before it's volcanic destruction. The

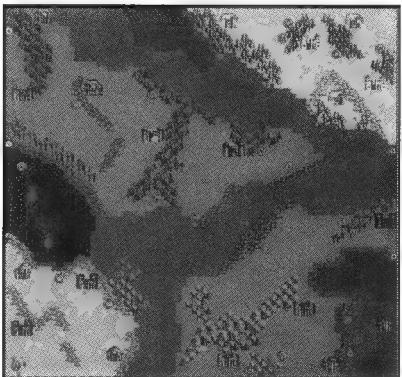
center of this island is lava covered by volcanoes. In the southwest, a Barbarian castle is located in a hostile desert. To the north and east is relatively calm grassland with a sorceress and a knight castle respectively. To the southeast is swamp, with a warlock castle. Resources and mines are relatively abundant. None of the castles are on the coast, so no boats can be built.

Strategy: First—the secret. In the center of the lava is a travel gate, linked to a secret alcove with three unguarded artifacts. As soon as you can, defeat the phoenixes guarding the travel gate and grab the treasure.

Other than the secret, this scenario is a fairly balanced, middle-of-the-road scenario. There are a reasonable number of resources and mines, so building is possible. Because it's a medium-sized land mass, you will get a little time before the computer is at your throat, but not too much.

The knight and barbarian castle are probably the two best for this scenario. The knight castle can be built up fairly quickly without any special resources. The barbarian castle is the most isolated of the four castles and will give you the most time to build up.

Be sure to explore the central lava area fairly early. There is plenty of treasure there, and the computer will find it quickly if you don't.



Empires At War

Size: Large

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One

Short Description: A massive conflict. Four large empires separated by heavily defended neutrals.

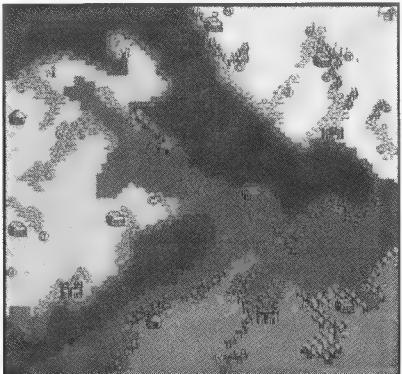
Long Description: This is one of the few scenarios that starts you off with a built-up

empire. All players start with two castles, two towns, and two heroes. Moreover, the castles are already partly built-up. The human always starts with warlock castles, towns, and heroes. The computer's forces are slightly more built-up initially, which is why this scenario allows only one human player.

Strategy: Since you are already built-up, this scenario should play out fairly quickly. Try to build at least a hydra swamp (for hydras) in each of your starting castles. You may not have enough sulfur to build the sixth-level dwelling, the black tower, for dragons. However, the griffons, minotaurs, and hydras produced by your two starting castles, when combined under a strong hero, are a formidable force. Also try to upgrade your two towns into castles as early as possible, and you can eventually have four castles producing troops.

Defensively, there are only two approaches to your empire, one in the southwest and one in the northeast. A strong hero positioned at your western castle should be able to defend both approaches, if properly managed. Leave one defensive hero there, and send a second, stronger hero, out through the northeastern exit. You'll have to defeat some monsters to do it, but by the second or third week you should be strong enough. Once this barrier is breached, scoop up mines and treasure. Avoid the neutral castles—they are heavily defended and not worth the trouble. You might also want to send a third, weak hero out to help scoop up treasure. Give this hero one fast creature, and grab as much treasure as possible before the hero is killed.

Because you start off quite built-up, this scenario blunts the effect of starting difficulty levels. Set on easy difficulty levels, this scenario is probably more difficult than its normal difficulty rating would imply. Set on expert, it is probably easier than most normal scenarios. Therefore, you should probably stay away from this scenario until you've got some experience with the game, but when you do finally play it, you might get a very good score.



The Sound

Size: Large

Difficulty: Normal

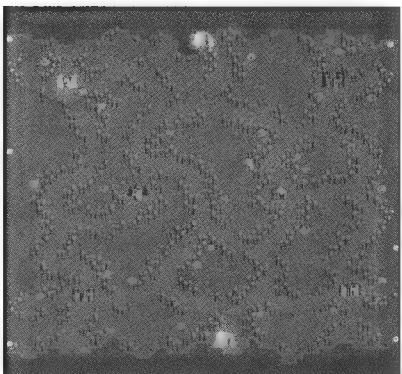
Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: Lots of resources make this a quick start but a tough finish.

Long Description: Another classic big brawler. A large map, with plenty of towns, leads to big battles. About half the map is snow and desert, making this map a good candidate for Barbarian heroes.

Strategy: This map is very large, but also fairly wide open, so heroes should range widely in search of treasures. Expect to be attacked in about the second or third week if you leave your castle vulnerable. However, the long supply lines back to the home castle mean that many computer heroes will not have very strong forces with them, and can be easily repulsed.

Travel by sea should be considered here, since the long narrow sounds (inlets of ocean) will take many days to traverse by horse, but can be crossed in one day by boat.



Bayou

Size: Large

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: The pathways keep you safe, but you'll need to take risks to conquer this marshy land.

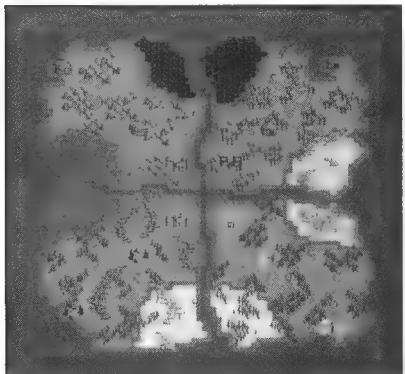
Long Description: A Cajun's delight, this map is entirely swamp, punctuated by many dirt pathways. All resources and mines are in the swampy areas, so expect to get your boots muddy.

Strategy: The good news about this scenario is there is no shortage of resources or mines. The bad news is you'll be so busy defending your castle, you may not have time to get them all. While the four castles are spaced fairly far apart, there is only a minimal monster buffer between them, and once this buffer falls, you can expect relentless attacks.

The treasures in the swamps are guarded, but only lightly. Try to send two heroes with medium forces out to grab loot, and leave a third hero at home to guard your castle. If the computer sees that your castle is well-defended, it will probably leave you alone and go after treasures itself.

There are two castles on each side of the map. If you can defeat the castle to your north or south, the pressure will be considerably lessened, and you can build up a stronger force before venturing to the other side of the land to take out the last two castles.

Two neutral towns in the center of the map on the northern and southern shores support shipyards, but building boats probably isn't worthwhile, with no islands to explore and a relatively accessible mainland.



Neighbors

Size: Medium

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: They say the grass is greener on the other side, but you'll have to get there to find out!

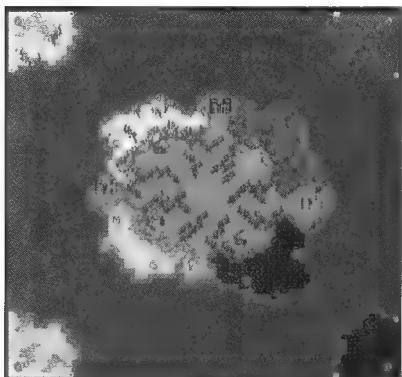
Long Description: This map looks like a large square neatly intersected into quarters by narrow horizontal and vertical ocean channels. Each of the four castles starts off on its own quarter, but at the center of the square within sight of the other castles. The primary means of travel between the quarters is a set of four travel gates, also at the center, but guarded by tough monsters. Boats can also be used for travel, but the boat-building towns are at the outer edges of the square and are not easily accessible.

Strategy: The monster guardians of the travel gates should give you a little time to build your castle up in preparation for the inevitable computer onslaught. Build at least three heroes to quickly explore your island. At least one of these heroes should be strong enough to knock out the medium strength monsters guarding many passes and mines. Every island has every type of mine on it, plus plenty of resources, so you should be able to build your castle all the way up. Don't play a knight castle, because when all four player's castles are fully built, as they soon will be, the knight's paladins are no match for cyclops, phoenixes, or dragons.



Conquer the two neutral towns on your island quickly and try to convert them to castles. With no gold mines available, you'll need the extra income the castles will bring you.

Once enemy heroes start coming through the travel gate, be sure to have a strong hero garrisoned in your castle. This will ward off enemy attacks, and you can also use that hero to intercept any enemy hero that tries to bypass your main castle and invade your island.



Town Haul

Size: Medium

Difficulty: Easy

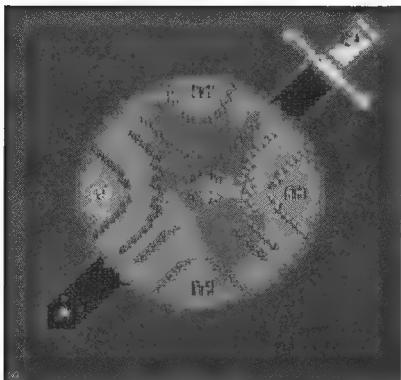
Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: The towns have all the neat stuff, but don't ignore the rougher terrains!

Long Description: This map could have easily been called "Treasure Haul." The towns and most other parts of this map are loaded with treasure, much of it unguarded. The four players start off on a central island overflowing with treasure. The island also has travel gates linked to remote islands that also have plenty of treasure.

Strategy: Played right, you will never want for money or resources on this island. Build plenty of heroes, they will quickly pay for themselves in treasure found. Each castle has one lightly guarded path leading away from it to the center of the island, around which can be found four towns with tons of resources around them. Send at least two heroes down this central corridor to grab the loot. Each castle also has one path leading around the perimeter of the island. It is a bit more heavily guarded, so send one fairly decent hero this way, with another lightly equipped hero to follow along and help scoop up treasure. Along this path you will find a travel gate, which will link you to the treasure-laden outlying islands.

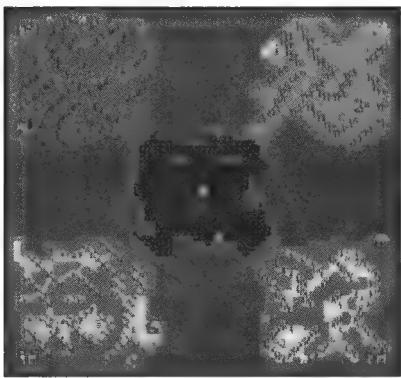
By this point you will have more than enough treasure and resources, but may be lacking quality troops. This is another scenario probably better suited to a sorceress or warlock castle, which can put the extra resources to good use building high-level buildings and mage guilds. As long as you grab treasure early and don't let your castle fall in the first two weeks, you should be able to build it up to maximum levels and coast to a fairly easy victory.



and dirt, with castles evenly spaced around the edge. The sword is made up of lava, snow, and desert, with artifacts and treasures at the ends.

Strategy: Each castle has a wood mill and an ore mine within easy reach, but the other types of mines are found only in the center of the map. You'll probably have to fight computer heroes for the center of the map, so don't count on getting much out of those mines. The abundant wood and ore make this a good map for knights, but more difficult for the spell-casting heroes.

Once you get a strong hero together, send him to whichever part of the sword is closest. If you can beat the defending monster, you'll be well rewarded with artifacts and resources, making your hero even stronger. Then you can work your way around the outside of the world and take out the enemy castles.



New World

Size: Small

Difficulty: Easy

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

Short Description: The fastest victory can lie on the outer edges, but power comes from the center.

Long Description: This map is a replica of the New World Computing logo (the earth with a sword through it). The earth is made up of grass

and dirt, with castles evenly spaced around the edge. The sword is made up of lava, snow, and desert, with artifacts and treasures at the ends.

Strategy: Each castle has a wood mill and an ore mine within easy reach, but the other types of mines are found only in the center of the map. You'll probably have to fight computer heroes for the center of the map, so don't count on getting much out of those mines. The abundant wood and ore make this a good map for knights, but more difficult for the spell-casting heroes.

Once you get a strong hero together, send him to whichever part of the sword is closest. If you can beat the defending monster, you'll be well rewarded with artifacts and resources, making your hero even stronger. Then you can work your way around the outside of the world and take out the enemy castles.

Ghost Town

Size: Medium

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: One to Four

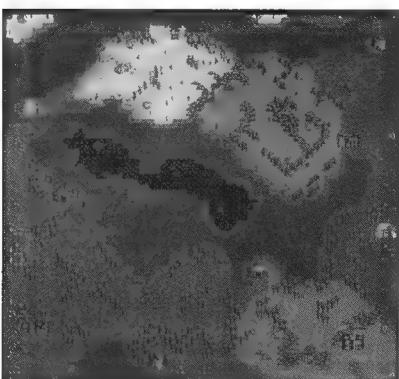
Short Description: Four nations fight for the remains of a fallen empire.

Long Description: The four castles are each located in their own individual land mass in the four map corners, one each of swamp, grass, snow, and desert. The four castles each have a land bridge to a central lava area with the ghost town. The ghost town is defended by 250 ghosts! However, if conquered, it is very powerful, with all dwellings built-up, plus a level-four mage guild.



Strategy: Because each of the four castles is located so far away from the others, you'll have plenty of time to consolidate your initial land mass. You'll receive plenty of resources, though not a whole lot of gold. There is one other town on your starting land mass. Conquer it quickly and upgrade it to a castle. Also of note are the abundant gazebos. Each land mass has three gazebos, which allows you to build all your heroes up to a good starting level. If you can work a hero around to the other three areas, you'll soon have a very powerful hero.

The ghost town at the center of the map is a tough nut. Don't even try taking it out without a Turn Undead spell. Even with this spell, the ghosts will be very tough, and could destroy your force before you can cast the spell enough times. Once you do conquer this castle, you'll have the game virtually wrapped up, since you'll have access to tons of troops and spells. Just don't lose the town, and you'll be fine.



Fire Island

Size: Large

Difficulty: Normal

Human Players Allowed: Two to Four

Short Description: Fire Island is said to hold the riches of the land.

Long Description: This map is basically a large ring of land surrounding a bay that contains Fire Island. Fire Island has a gold mine, plenty of treasure, and artifacts. It can only be reached by boat, and the boats can only be built by the neutral towns on the bay coast.

Strategy: Another classic builder—you'll need a strong castle to win this one. Consolidate the area around your castle initially, and try to build up both your castle and your mage guild. Barbarians are good choices here, for a lot of the terrain is rough.

When you are strong enough, work your way to one of the two neutral towns on the northern and southern side of the bay. Capture it, turn it into a castle, and build a boatyard. Once you can make it to Fire Island, the three artifacts and tremendous amount of gold there should swing the game decisively in your favor.

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